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September 10, 1986 #292

ROCK AUSTRALIA MAGAZINE

RAM

PAUL KELLY
Past The Post

HERBS
GO-BETWEENS
STEPHEN CUMMINGS
THE HOUSEMARTINS
SCREAMING BLUE MESSIAHS

Legends On Tour
DR JOHN
TAJ MAHAL

On The Way Up
LUCKY DINOSAURS
TALL TALES & TRUE
VICIOUS KITES
COSMIC PSYCHOS

Live — CRAMPS, SEVERED HEADS, WILKO JOHNSON
Albums — I'M TALKING, JOHNNYS, UPS & DOWNS
THE INDIE FILE — A Reprise

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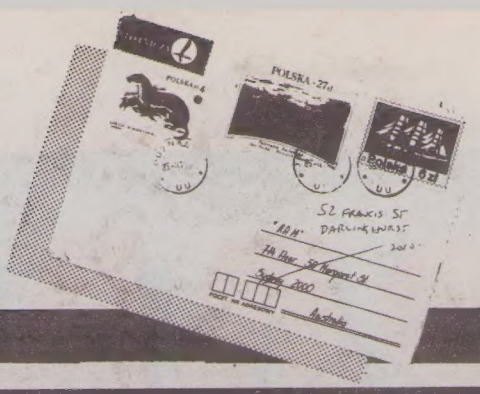
PIC: FRANCINE McDOUGALL

RAM LETTERS



SEND YOUR LETTERS TO: P.O. BOX 937, DARLINGHURST NSW 2010

LOVE LETTER

Dear Editor (aka luscious demigod), Did you know that RAM is an incomplete anagram of 'anagram'? PS: Dear Mark Demetrius, William Blake just told me he hopes your aesthetic isn't going to be retrospective.

Smooches,

Bill the Cankerer, Bankstown, NSW.

Dear Bill, we've passed your comment on to Mark — or Brother Mark, as he is now known — who has gone into retreat at a Franciscan monastery to work on his forthcoming 10-volume study called *William Blake: Lust For Glory*. He recently underwent extremely painful surgery — a complete aesthetectomy. And did you know that RAM is an incomplete anagram of 'scram'?

FRENCH LETTER

Dear RAM, would J. J. Adams please do a story on Les Outsidors (sic), who performed at the Hopetoun Hotel on the evening of the second of August this year? They were the little-known support act for a visiting Victorian act and were fantastic. I was not a fan of the bands' and saw them for the first time that night. Now I crave to see them again. Over to you, J.J....

J. Jean-Low, Sydney, NSW.

J.J.'s already done it, J.J. — turn, if you haven't already done so, to page 11, issue #291 for le inside story... But as for seeing them live again, you are, 'ow you say, a little too late, *n'est pas*? You could always emigrate.

CRITIC'S CORNER

Just been reading the August 31 issue (RAM #290), and feel sufficiently engaged to want to comment on two of the record reviews:

1) LOU REED: Mistrial — Your reviewer, like those in other publications, thinks Video Violence a successful and interesting song, lyrically and musically. Now, I know that moral outrage at plagiarism, and Mr James Osterburg, are both in eclipse at the moment, but if anyone with access to a copy of Iggy Pop's (1981?) album Party were to dust it off and take a listen to the track Houston Is Hot Tonight and then play Video Violence, they would have to notice something. In fact the ripoff (musically) would have to rank with Steve Miller's pedestrian use of the Cream riff for Crossroads (even if the lyrics of that belonged to Robert Johnson).

2) EURYTHMICS: Revenge — I am not a Eurythmics fan, and have often teased my sister for liking that embarrassing video for Would I Lie To You? where David Stewart exhibits his lost adolescence guitar showmanship to pitiful effect. Nevertheless, I thought that the album from which that song came showed a promising development away from what everyone has categorised as the Eurodisco of their earlier work, towards a less pretentious soul/r'n'b style. I agree with Annie Lennox's reaction to the criticisms of phony 'blackness' that were levelled at her as an exercise in trendy reverse discrimination.

So, to the RAM review. I'm afraid I haven't been able to afford the album (borrow your sister's copy — Ed.) itself yet, but I have heard four of the songs on the radio. Two of them, including the current single, are poppy big production numbers, which could have fitted on one of the first albums and which are, in my opinion, quite forgettable, as suggested by your reviewer.

I suppose I have by this stage made my r'n'b bias quite clear, but that being acknowledged, I'd like to ask why the reviewer didn't even mention the other two songs I've heard, which I think were called Original Sin and Let's Fall in Love (or something similar). The latter begins with honking car horns (the reviewer does refer to that) and, like Original Sin, features the powerful and originally mixed harmonica as a principal instrument. The playing is as good as Stevie Wonder's obligato on the Angel track off their last album, and makes me wonder what Little Walter would have sounded like if he'd had access to 80s studios. Both songs are driving r'n'b vehicles with sinister lyrics and surpass any of their previous black-tinged stuff because they aren't so pretty, or veering towards a kind of r'n'b MOR.

In other words, contrary to what your reviewer has concluded, my impression is that (at least as far as the two songs I've mentioned are concerned) the Eurythmics aren't just playing it safe and groping for ideas on their new record. More likely they're releasing the potential of a creative and deliberate move away from white synth-pop ephemera towards the bedrock of rock'n'roll — a music whose apocalyptic grandeur diminishes in direct proportion to its distance from the blues.

Dokurusman, Darwin, NT.

Whew! Considered a career in music journalism Dok? You know, some people think we make the letters up, but really, the only parts of RAM that are totally fictitious are *Transit Lounge*, the Charts and the Record Reviews. But to reply to a few points raised by your fascinating (and bloody *long!*) letter... We fail to see the difference between Lou Reed's alleged plagiarism of Iggy Pop and Eurythmics' looting of bygone r'n'b styles. Wham! have gotten away with something similar. (Motown). Blues artists stole from each other constantly, and the great Robert Johnson was no exception. And r'n'b is a seething hotbed of borrowings! Remember Percy Sledge's beautiful ballad, *When A Man Loves A Woman?* Yep, swiped... from Procol Harum's *Whiter Shade Of Pale*, which was in turn purloined from Bach. As for the *Crossroads* riff, it features the three most-used notes in blues, jazz and r'n'b (and therefore rock'n'roll), and has been used by more musicians than Steve Miller's had hot breakfasts. Even the last sentence of your letter has a distinctly familiar ring. But hey, so what?! Keep writing. Oh, and the harmonica on the new Eurythmics album belongs to Jimmy Zee, who stole it from the Bognor Regis Music Emporium.

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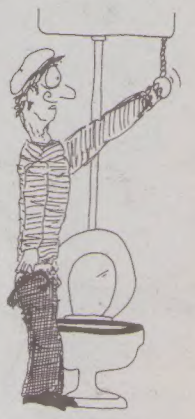
FRENCH STENCH by GREG SMITH

In centuries past,
Explosive French farts
Have made Europe smell
Somewhat fouler



Once gastronomique
They are now atomique
C'est la French fart's
finest hour

Anal retention
May be a French invention
But in the South Pacific
they empty their bowel

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BOOK NOW AT USUAL OUTLETS

NEW ALBUM 'TRUE COLORS' DUE OUT SEPTEMBER

TRANSIT LOUNGE

PEOPLE - EVENTS - THINGS ON THE MOVE

STAR CLUB ON THE RISE
Japanese Punks To Record Here

While old bands from overseas come here to die (or to prolong their tenuous legends), younger guns are making trips abroad to record in Australia. In recent weeks, French rockers Fixed Up put down an album at a Sydney studio; next, we're due for a visit from arguably Japan's best-known punk band, the STAR CLUB — they'll arrive next month to record a six-track mini album for local release, and hope to return for a tour early next year. For now, they're about to put out a taster single for the uninitiated: *Aggressive Teens* b/w *Bodies* (a cover of the Pistols' classic), on the long-dormant Green label through Powderworks/RCA. Both songs are lifted from the Star Club's most recent LP, *Final Count* — which went instant Top 100 upon release in Japan earlier this year. Already armed with a sizeable Australian cult following courtesy airplay on 2JJJ's *Nippi Rock Shop*, the Star Club are out to reverse the popular image of Japan as the home of sugar-pop, Godzilla dolls and Datsuns.

GIG VIOLENCE... Bottles may have flown with alarming regularity during recent **Cramps** shows in this country, but that's mild aggro compared to what's been going down overseas of late. In England, a **Queen** fan died of multiple stab wounds during the band's set at the recent **Knebworth** festival. And in California, a 38-year-old fan stood up in front of the crowd at the **Cure's** concert in Inglewood and knifed himself several times to rousing applause; apparently onlookers thought it was part of the show. Later, police revealed that the man had attempted suicide "to impress a girlfriend"... A few weeks earlier, an 18-year-old youth was fatally shot during a fight in front of the stage at a **Bo Diddley** show in Adelanto, California. More recently, riot police pulled the plug on a **Run-D.M.C.** concert at Long Beach last week when gang violence broke out amidst the 14,000-strong crowd. Some 40 people were treated for various injuries, ranging from stab wounds and fractures to lacerations caused by flying glass... And at last month's **Monster '86 Jam** in Brooklyn, featuring various premier rap acts, security guards opened fire (!) on unruly sections of the crowd, killing a 14-year-old boy and wounding three others.

An LA Superior Court judge has dismissed a massive suit for damages filed against **Ozzy Osbourne** and CBS Records, arising out of the suicide of a 19-year-old youth whose family alleged he'd shot himself after listening to Ozzy's *Suicide Solution* on headphones for five hours straight... Though the judge ruled that the song's lyrics were protected by the American First Amendment's "guarantees of freedom of expression", he did not rule out the right of appeal. Wise move...

David Crosby has been granted parole on drugs and weapons charges after serving six months of a five-year term in a Texas prison. Though he's yet to ride out three years' probation, the release has fuelled rumours of a **Crosby Stills Nash & Young** reunion tour (gasp!) — "provided he can straighten up," say S, N & Y. Meanwhile, **Stephen Stills** and **Neil Young** are rehearsing secretly with **Richie Furay** for a possible **Buffalo Springfield** reunion — if they can sort out the contractual tangles and avoid maiming each other during rehearsals. Talk about *deja vu*...

"As exclusively predicted by *Juke*" no less, there's likely to be some form of **Easybeats** reunion show before year's end — then again, maybe not. Closer to the here and now are planned reformation gigs by the **Riptides** (featuring lynchpin **Mark Callaghan**, now with **GANGgajang**), Sydney "cult legends" **Surfside Six** and erstwhile r'n'b/soul/funk combo the **Champions**, fronted by the redoubtable **Sally King** (bassist **Howard Shawcross** now leads **Howard I Know**). All three shows will take place at the **Graphic Arts Club** in Sydney in the first half of next month, with the Riptides also appearing in Brisbane (see *4ZZZ item elsewhere in* Transit)... All "as exclusively predicted by this magazine"!

UK band name of the month time, and we have a tie — **Thatcher On Acid** and **Zodiac Mindwarp & the Love Reaction.** Far out.

Models Talk To RAM Shock! In what's his first interview with this magazine since 1983, **Sean Kelly** lifts the band's veil of silence in a forthcoming issue as their new single *Evolution* edges up local charts ahead of an album recorded earlier this year in London, entitled *Panorama*.

If our recent features on girl groups **Sophisticated Boom Boom** and **Silk & the Slatterns** were your cup of nostalgia, perhaps you'd like to... ***Stop In The Name Of Love***, coincidentally the title of a "froth & bubble, all-girl tribute to the 50s and 60s" currently sashaying across the stage at Sydney's **Kinselas**. Starring an all-purpose, all-singing, *all-girl* group tagged the **Fabulous Singlettes** (formed especially for the show), *SITNOL* lovingly recreates this "sassy, flashy and opulent period... famous for its stiletto shoes, plastic go-go boots and skin-tight cha-cha pants". If you've ever shimmied or sighed along with the likes of the Supremes, the Shangri-Las, Ronettes, Chiffons, Marvellettes, Crystals, Dixie Cups, Shirelles etc etc, then check this out. (Brought to you by the team responsible for Glenn Shorrock's *One For The Money* extravaganza, with "spiritual guidance from rock guru Glenn A. Baker".)

Proving that taste (or the lack of it) has no regard for political boundaries, **Queen** recently played to 80,000 fans in Budapest — the largest ever concert audience in the Eastern Bloc. Also rockin' behind the Iron Curtain will be **Iron Maiden,** who are to tour Yugoslavia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland before playing west of the wall, east of Suez and south of the Pacific. Oh, and north of America...

After three singles and an album, **Propaganda** have split. Apparently, members are suing their record label ZTT and leader **Claudia Brucken** over the right to use the name. Both **Ralf Dorper** and **Michael Morten** have returned to their jobs in Germany (Ralf works in a bank, while Michael is with the Dusseldorf Symphony Orchestra). Claudia, whose husband is ZTT founder and mouth **Paul Morley,** will remain in the UK to record — possibly with ex-Simple Minds bassist **Derek Forbes.**

Speaking of meeting the Minds, they'll be releasing a double live album in the new year. They plan to record it at the Paris Zenyth, following their Annual Memorial **Simple Minds** Australian Tour... More new vinyl from **R.E.M.,** whose new LP *Life's Rich Pageant* and a single *Fall On Me* are due by September... And will the **Pogues** go major with the release of a new single, *Haunted*, for MCA? Hard cheese for Stiff, who'll probably find it harder to compete with big budget items like a spaghetti western video directed by **Alex *(Repo Man)* Cox** in Spain. Cox, also engaged in directing a spag western feature starring **Joe Strummer, Iggy Pop** and *Harry Dean Stanton* (will he use the same props?) called *Straight To Hell*, was responsible for the soon-to-be-released controversial biopic, *Sid And Nancy* — for which Strummer wrote the theme song, *Love Kills* with a little help from old Clash enemy **Mick Jones** (now fronting **Big Audio Dynamite**). Just to prove beyond doubt they'd both buried the hatchet, Strummer returned the favour in collaborating with Jones on a song for B.A.D.'s upcoming second album. By the way, recording commitments have forced postponement of B.A.D.'s rumoured local visit as support to **INXS** on their national tour next month. The slot has been filled by English avant funksters **Shriekback**...

More Strange Bedfellows... Chief officer of the Percussion Squad **Stewart Copeland** is overseeing soundtrack work on a new movie called *Out Of Bounds*; he's co-performing the title track with one Stuart Goddard, aka **Adam Ant.** The stick insect meets the extinct insect? And egghead guitarist **Robert Fripp** has teamed up with one-time **Be-Bop Deluxe** frontman **Bill Nelson** to bend 12 strings on **David Sylvian's** new single, *Taking The Veil*... rumour has it both axemen also appear on the former Japan singer's second solo LP, due out next month...

Though psychedelic legends **Pink Floyd** unofficially closed up shop with their *Final Cut* LP of 1983, guitarist **David Gilmour** and drummer **Nick Mason** are set to release a new LP WITHOUT **Roger Waters** — one of the Floyd's founding members, and acknowledged leader. Waters has in the past made it quite clear that any attempts by other members of Pink Floyd to use the name without his consent would bring on instant legal action. *'Wish you weren't here,'* say Gilmour and Mason.

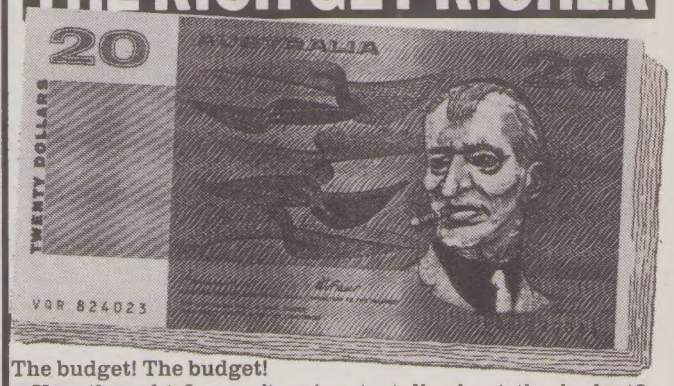
All three members of the **Police** were spotted in a London studio recently with producer **Laurie Latham,** fuelling rumours of a new album... or something. Sorry to disappoint y'all, but the trio were merely retouching some old material for an upcoming *Greatest Hits* LP, due out in October.

Out of the west they came, and through a fortuitous meeting with Midnight Oil drummer **Rob Hirst**, Perth's **Sun Dogs** have scored a record contract and an East Coast address. The first single, *Bang Bang Johnny* (produced by Hirst) has been released to encouraging response. Perhaps they've been singled out as one of the few WA bands not saddled with a botanically-derived name (Triffids, Bamboos, Marigolds etc)...

Is this the decade of the machine-made melody and the computer-generated rhythm? — and if so, so what? Sydney's **2JJJ-FM** examines these questions and their historical perspective in its ongoing series, ***The Sound Of The Eighties***, the first part of which went to air last Monday, August 25. Such practitioners as **Iva Davies,** Severed Heads' **Tom Ellard** and former Mi-Sex keyboardist **Murray Burns** pass comment on the musical microchip reaction in Parts 2 & 3, aired at 8pm on September 1st and 8th... so *interface*, already!

APOLOGIES to RAY FARLEY, who fell victim to the missing by-line on his JENNY MORRIS feature last issue. Come back Ray, and please put down that nasty-looking machete...

THE RICH GET RICHER



The budget! The budget!

You thought I wasn't going to talk about the budget? Whaddaya take me for? *You* might be sick to death of it, but to me the budget is Big Fun!

If you think the music business isn't really affected, think again. For one thing, the government is now competing with us, and even though they're slow and stupid, so are the chairmen of a lot of multi-national companies. Beware!

Where does the government compete with the music business? In the most basic arena of all, that's where! Both of us are in the market to take money away from poor people. Poor people buy music so they can forget about being poor. The Government takes their money because it's easy to do and they can't fight back. Fair enough.

But think about it. When we take their money, they've got a choice. We try to minimise the choice by telling them how bad they want the guff we sell 'em, but they've still got a choice. When the Government does it, it's compulsory. You don't have to be Lee Iacocca to work out that this gives the Government a big head start.

So where do we stand, what with the poor getting a real pasting this time round? Bugger the doomsayers pal, there's two sides to every coin. Let's flip this one and I'll give you the good news...

Paul and I had a chat before this thing went down. I told him that a lot of people were going to be less than impressed with what he wanted to do to the poor. I told him that a lot of other people had the same idea, and that they wouldn't be amused to find the cupboard bare. We sat around talking for a while, I admired his French Imperial clock collection and he told me how much he'd learnt from me. After a bit of this, I told him what he probably already knew but didn't want to face up to.

"Paul," I said, "The only way to clear this thing up is to make more people poor."

And so he did.

J. WALLACE GRUBBLESNUTCH

MIDNIGHT OIL/HOODOO GURUS/HUNTERS & COLLECTORS
RADIATORS/SPY V SPY/BOOM CRASH OPERA/CHOIRBOYS
Concert Bill Of The Decade: All This For $10!!

Upwards of 25,000 people are expected to file into outer Sydney's new Parklea Market Complex on Saturday, August 30 for one of the most impressive lineups of local talent since Nararo '83 — and for a third of the ticket price. What's more, YOUTH LIVE '86 (as this benefit concert in aid of Sydney flood relief and the establishment of permanent youth shelters has been dubbed) will take place under cover in an *indoor venue* — the largest in the Southern Hemisphere.

For just $10 (plus a $2 booking fee), you'll witness a bill that includes MIDNIGHT OIL, HOODOO GURUS, HUNTERS & COLLECTORS, the RADIATORS, SPY Vs SPY, BOOM CRASH OPERA and the CHOIRBOYS.

THE VENUE: Cnr Sunnyholt Rd.& Old Windsor Rd, Parklea via Blacktown.
PARKING: Ample space in the Complex carpark plus adjacent properties.
PUBLIC TRANSPORT: The SRA will provide extra trains to and from Blacktown Station. A local bus company will allocate more than 40 buses to ferry patrons from Blacktown station to the venue, located five minutes up Sunnyholt Rd. Buses will arrive and depart *each minute* for the duration of the concert.
CONCERT TIMES: 4pm-10.30pm.
VISIBILITY: Giant video screens placed at regular intervals throughout the venue, which measures an area of 1100 square metres.
REFRESHMENTS: Food and soft drink available throughout the concert, at minimal prices. DEFINITELY NO ALCOHOL PERMITTED.
TICKETS: Available now from all Bass outlets.

TRANSIT LOUNGE

4ZZZ Presents: TEN YEARS IN AN OPEN-PLAN ETHNOSPHERE

Brisbane's renegade FM radio station cum tireless venue promoters 4ZZZ have rediscovered a former local haunt in which to present their consistent roster of alternative music — from bands within city limits to visiting interstate acts. In usual punning fashion, they've dubbed the lounge bar of the Australian National Hotel in South Brisbane the 'Trance-Plant' — continuing a tradition upheld by such predecessors as 'Amyl's Nightspace' and 'Sensoria', once located in the heart of the sleepy city. If there's one positive quality generated by Queensland's oppressive political (and literal) climate, it's imagination.

That's also one of the obvious agents behind an exhibition of youth culture artifacts dubbed *'Know Your Product'*, to be co-presented by 4ZZZ and the city's Institute of Modern Art next month. The show, spanning a decade of local artistic endeavour from 1976 till now, will incorporate recording installations, art works, posters, films, graphics, fanzines, photographs and videos (amongst other gems from the archives).

By way of a performance centrepiece, the specially reformed Riptides (also appearing at Sydney's Graphic Arts Club for a one-off show on September 5) will play Brisbane's Easts Leagues Club for the "very last time" (again) one week later. The lineup features original members Mark Callaghan (now in GANGajang), Andrew Leitch and Michael Gorman, with Gajang's Buzz Bidstrup behind the drumkit. Also slated to appear in successive weeks are local avant-garde trailblazers Xero, the Swell Guys, Machines That Walk and erstwhile militant all-women's group Spit. And there's a chance Brisbane's prodigal sons the Saints will wrap up the concert programme on September 27.

As this year's wave of Elvis nostalgia floods Australia with the opening of *Are You Lonesome Tonight?* on the theatre stage in Sydney, consider the fate of the **Elvis Presley Exhibit** — a mobile museum based in the King's hometown Memphis. The exhibit has been reportedly relieved of its major drawcard... none other than the Great Man's *underpants*, 'cos they were, er, upstaging other items on display. Said the E.P.E.'s curator: "We've got Elvis's wedding ring, his jewellery, his guitar and his Rolls-Royce, and all people were asking about was the underwear. I couldn't handle it..." ...Supposedly because everyone else wanted to?

Convalescents' Corner... Grateful Dead guitarist **Jerry Garcia** is very much alive if still a little weary after leaving hospital earlier this month to continue his recovery from a diabetic coma. And the doyenne of jazz singers over half of this century, **Ella Fitzgerald** steered close to immortality late July when she was placed under intensive care following congestive heart failure. In true resilient form, stellar Ella had breezed out of the hospital within three days.

Add to your list of visiting American bluesmen one **Elvin Bishop**, seminal member of the Butterfield Blues Band and successful soloist in his own right. Remember *Fooled Around And Fell In Love*? Since breaking through worldwide with that song in 1976, Bishop has extended his Chicago blues roots into more eclectic rock and r'n'b... He'll be here in September for dates at the **Basement** (Sydney), Whale Beach and Melbourne's **Prince Of Wales Hotel** with local backing musicians including **Victor Rounds** (bass), **Russell Dunlop** (drums) and **Jimmy Doyle** on guitar...

As well as picking up the **Cramps'** latest LP *A Date With Elvis* in the face of indifference from major labels, **Liberation Records** have lined up for local release the **Ramones'** new album, *Animal Boy*, English politico **Billy Bragg's** forthcoming *Levi Stubbs' Tears* EP plus product from Californian dancefloor sensations **Timex Social Club**... All this may go some way to, er, redressing the balance of inflicting **Samanfa Fox** and equally tiresome drag queen **Lana Pellay** on an unsuspecting Australian public...

Expats On The Move: **David McComb** of the **Triffids**, interviewed in a Stepney (London) squat: "Somewhere like Paris has been described ten million times, and every time you walk down a street in Paris you get buried under the weight of every page that's ever been written about that street. In Australia, you honestly get a complete sense of nothingness." On making it: "When you get to a place like London, mere self-belief is not enough. You have to scream to the loudest... The Smiths are only where they are now because one member has constantly said 'We are the best'... The (Triffids) used to be more democratic, and I don't think we made very good records like that... I think it's important that someone does take the risk of being arrogant enough to offend everybody." Perhaps you'll prefer the approach of **Robert Forster** (the **Go-Betweens**) in a German publication. Apparently, he thinks his band is "*absolut sexy*". It loses in the translation, but he adds: "I have a good body; I could've been a dancer. We all could be pinups... *Unsere Rhythmen sind Sex*". You know, any local journalist would *kill* for that kinda copy. Love it when you talk dirty, Bob...

Record company interest in the **Screaming Tribesmen** is hotting up in the States, and negotiations are currently in progress to conclude a deal with the country's largest independent distribution network. Meanwhile, the band's *Date With A Vampyre* mini album recently hit the No. 3 spot on the East Coast College Radio chart, auguring well for a proposed tour in June '87. And the Tribesmen have been picked up by the same booking agency that handles such as the **Violent Femmes, the Replacements, 10,000 Maniacs, Guadalcanal Diary** and **Jonathan Richman's Modern Lovers**. Immediate plans include the early September release of a new mini album, *Top Of The Town* on the Rattlesnake label (through Survival), and an associated tour of the Eastern states...

Those doyennes of sleaze, the **Wet Ones** are about to release their first so-called "real record" — a four-track mini LP entitled *It's A Pre-Moistened World*, produced by the semi-legendary **Billy Baxter**.

THE (THIN) EDGE OF THE WEDGE
Stay Of Execution Till November

Though ABC-TV's music/youth culture programme *Edge Of The Wedge* kicks off a new series on September 1, it's likely to be its last stand — unless viewers' pressure can be brought to bear.

Executive Producer of *The Wedge*, Craig Collie last week blamed internal politics and some "erratic programming decisions" as the chief culprits behind the ABC's decision to axe the programme once the new series expires on October 29. "It may seem like a final decision," he said, "but that doesn't necessarily mean it is. We have to sustain the flow of support from all quarters."

That support has manifested itself in the form of over 100 letters to ABC management and numerous phone calls to *Wedge* staffers since the axing was first foreshadowed in RAM two months ago (issue #287). But that wave needs to assume tidal strength if *The Wedge* is to survive beyond its allotted lifespan.

"It seems a pity the ABC is backing away from its undertaking to provide serious programming for youth," said Collie, referring to the ABC-convened Youth Advisory Committee meeting last November which sought opinions from young audiences as to what *they* wanted to see on TV. "To have spent a year following up its findings in the face of internal political wranglings within the ABC has been frustrating to say the least," he went on. "There has been no clamouring from outside to have *The Wedge* dropped, but the general political/economic climate, budget cuts etcetera can lead to some erratic programming decisions.

"Most of our criticisms have come from those who still basically believe in the objectives of the programme, and they've been constructive."

Obviously the more letters of support and/or constructive criticism despatched to ABC management between now and Christmas, the better chance *Edge Of The Wedge* has of lasting it into 1987. Send your missives to:

The Manager of TV,
ABC, GPO BOX 9994 SYDNEY 2001.

DEBUT ALBUM

FEATURING "Too Young For Promises"
and new single "Think of Me"

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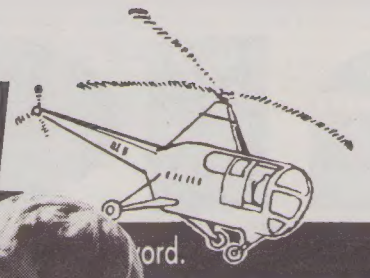
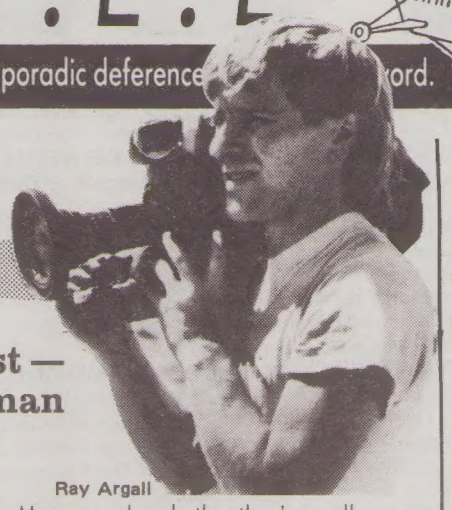
M.E.D.I.A S.P.I.E.L



An occasional column devoted to movements on the airwaves — TV, Radio, Video, with sporadic deference ord.

THE POP PROCESS

In Print & On The Box



Ray Argall

VIRGINIA MONCRIEFF divines the nature of the beast — dissecting ABC's Pop Movie and a new book on the human element, Pay To Play as two relevant cases in point...

BY NOW, the discerning late afternoon TV viewer will have cottoned on to *Pop Movie* (on the ABC, Thursdays at 6pm). It's a series that deserves attention: a six-part look at the Australian rock industry through the eyes of those involved, or *hoping* to be involved.

Pop Movie was made for a ridiculously miniscule $300,000 by Ray Argall, Christina Pozzan and Daniel Schars, all of whom spent four years raising the dough for the project and about a year (in fits and starts) filming and editing. The result is an obviously low-budget series, which starts with assorted pop stars listing an A-B-C of rock 'n' roll pitfalls, and ends with Jumping The Beat — a rookie trio of young hopefuls launching their musical careers.

Pop Movie can be roughly divided into two parts: the first three shows are studded with industry heavyweights talking about their experiences and collective knowledge. P. Garrett esq. executes himself with his usual oratorical aplomb, while Damien Lovelock from the Celibate Rifles is the best of the rest. There are also appearances by Angry Anderson ("Well, if someone said that a short, fat bald bloke with broken teeth covered in tatts was gonna get anywhere in this industry, you'd have thought they were mad!"), members of I'm Talking, Do.Re.Mi and Crowded House.

The series really begins to pick up in the last three episodes, where the 'raw material' is displayed — young people playing in bands for the hell of it, untouched by cynicism, bitterness or the poison that seems to get to everyone in the end (and given the extreme negativity of many of the guest pop stars, the blow is bitter when it hits). These last three episodes should be compulsory viewing for anyone who has forgotten what it's like to be a 'musician' for the sheer fun of it all — it certainly highlights how ghoulish the rest of the rock industry is.

Pop Movie is ultimately very sobering to watch: Argall, Pozzan and Schars present a pretty grim scenario of rip-offs, cheating, exploitation, bad management and raw deals. At times, it becomes almost overwhelmingly negative, although Ray defends the tone of the film by saying that rock 'n' roll is seen as so intrinsically glamorous that it's well nigh impossible to go overboard with the cautionary tales.

"What we want to get across," insists Ray, "is that all of the business side of the industry — the managers, agents and record companies — are there for profit. We're not saying that that's bad, it's just a fact of life that a lot of people miss. Many people, whether they're really young or not, don't realise that rock 'n' roll is just a big business to most of the people involved in it. Profit is not necessarily a dirty word, but a lot of would-be musicians just don't understand that mentality.

"It *is* an extremely glamorous business — we don't want to deny that. It's real fun most of the time; that's why people want to get involved. There's a lot of work in the industry and a lot of jobs, and it can be rewarding. To make a living out of something that you really enjoy is the best feeling in the world. The aim behind *Pop Movie* is to let people know that it can also be hard work, and there are a lot — a helluva lot — of pitfalls and business manouevres.

"The best part of making *Pop Movie* was working with kids at the other end of the scale — bands like Jumping The Beat, and the rock musical at the highschool in Adelaide (episode four). It's great to work with people who feel they have nothing to lose but everything to give. I've worked in the rock industry for quite a while now, and I want to work with younger teenagers much more — they are so refreshingly uncynical!"

Pop Movie is a long overdue look at the machinations of the Australian rock industry, and it is, by turns, humorous, annoying or slow, but never far off the mark. It's a cheapo production, but for my money that counts in its favour — after all, the rock industry is a warts 'n' all effort too. If you haven't been watching it, rectify your programming deficiencies immediately.

IF *Pop Movie* plays up the business side of rock 'n' roll, then *Pay to Play* — a new book by Helen Thomas and Wendy Milsom (Penguin) — studies the 'human' side of music: the creativity, and the impact of money and fame on some of Australia's rockstars past and present.

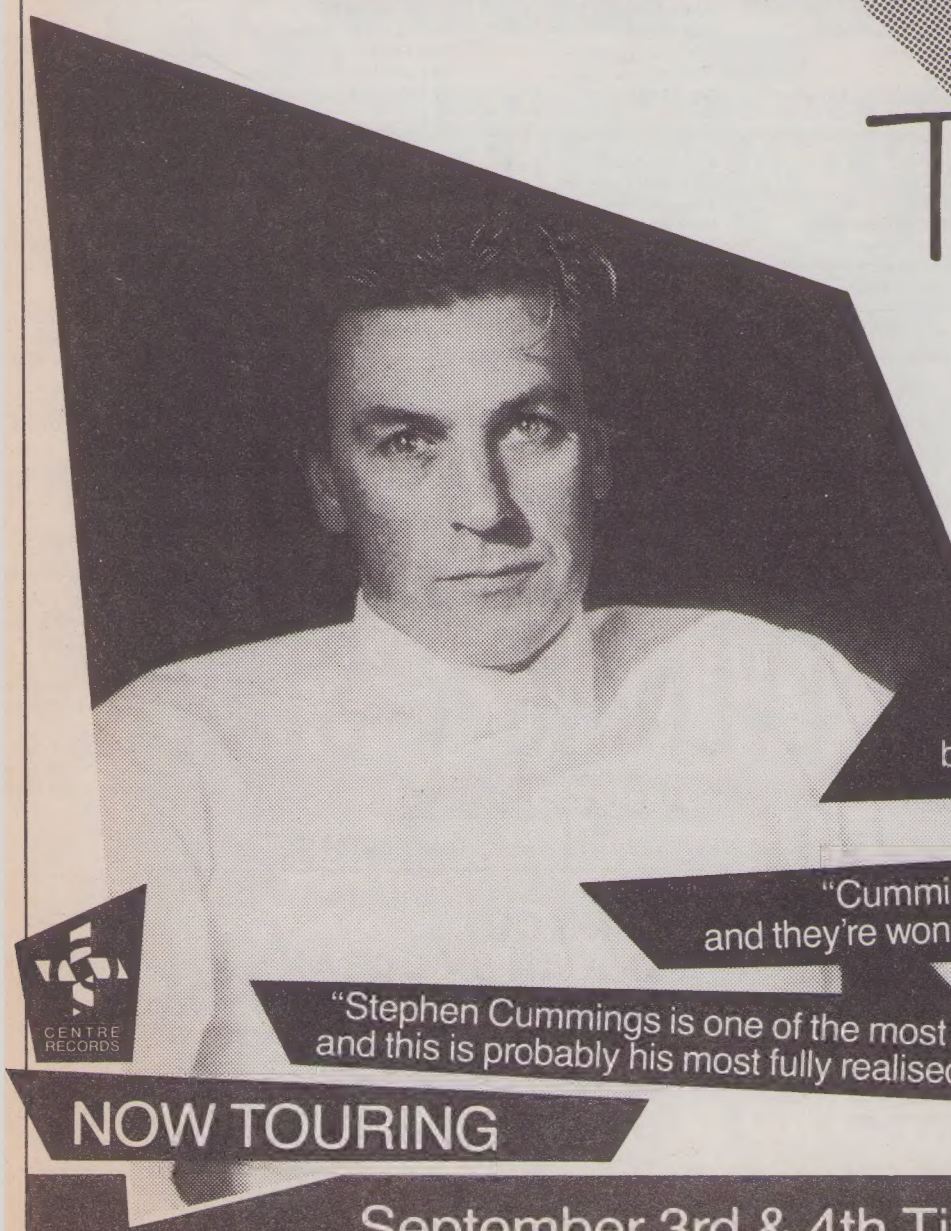
Somehow, there are more stars from the past — hoary old Melbourne chestnuts like Red Symons, John Farnham, Ross Wilson, Renee Geyer, Greg Ham and James Reyne are interviewed — while the bona fide new stars of the 80s (Michael Hutchence, Sean Kelly, Grace Knight, Jimmy Barnes, Mark Seymour, Martin Plaza — even Nick Cave, God love him) are mysteriously absent.

Pay To Play is straight interviews with the artists — most are staggered over several years, so it all reads a touch cock-eyed. Often the first conversation takes place in 1980, the second in 1982, maybe even a third in 1984. Each interview is fairly formularised — no scoops here! — and does little to reveal the 'real' person behind the public facade. Wendy Milsom and Helen Thomas are both formidable journalists with excellent track records and enviable reputations, but *Pay To Play* is not their finest moment. It's a book that has no logic — right down to the inexplicable photo of Kate Ceberano on the cover, when she features nowhere in the text.

Publishing houses, for reasons best known to their little selves, release pitifully few works on pop culture. How disappointing, then, when one scrapes through only to have no place in 1986.

STEPHEN CUMMINGS

This Wonderful Life



featuring

"SPEAK WITH FRANKNESS"
"FORBIDDEN TERRITORY"
& "I CAN'T FACE THE DAY"

"This Wonderful Life" is a mellow and enticing album, brimming with classy, soft soul and melodic ballads." Andrew Watt – Beat

"Cummings has one of the best sets of vocal chords in the country and they're wonderfully showcased on 'This Wonderful Life'." Stuart Coupe – Sun Herald

"Stephen Cummings is one of the most idiosyncratic, neurotic and irresistible song writers in the country and this is probably his most fully realised work since the early sports." Toby Creswell – Australian Editor, Rolling Stone

CENTRE RECORDS

NOW TOURING

September 3rd & 4th Tivoli

PolyGram

GIG GUIDE

TOURS

THE ANGELS
26 Castle Hill RSL
27 St George Sailing Club
28 Newcastle Workers
29 Central Coast Leagues Club
30 Bankstown RSL
31 Avalon RSL
ELVIN BISHOP
Sept 8,9,10 The Basement, Sydney
11 Moby Dick Surfers Club, Whale Beach, 12, 13 Prince of Wales Hotel
JOHN CALE
Sept 10 East Leagues Club
11 TBA
12, 13 Central Club Hotel, Richmond
14 Universal Theatre, Melbourne
16 Old Canberra Inn, Canberra
17 Old Melbourne Hotel, Perth
18 Le Rox, Adelaide
19, 20, 21 Sydney Trade Union Club

JOE COCKER
Oct 18 Brisbane Ent. Cent
21, 22 Sydney Ent. Cent
24 Bruce Stadium, Canberra
27 Apollo Ent. Centre
28 Melbourne Ent. Centre
Nov 1 Intl. Velodrome, Launceston
4 Perth Ent. Centre
9 Regent Theatre, Dunedin
10 Palmerston North Sports Centre
13 Wellington, Michael Fowler Cent
14 Logan Campbell Centre
DIO/BOSS/WHITE WIDOW
Sept 13 Sydney Ent. Centre
16 Melbourne Festival Hall
18 Apollo Theatre, Adelaide
20 Festival Hall, Brisbane
THE FUREYS
Sept 2 Kalgoorlie Town Hall
3 Queens Park Theatre, Geraldton
4 Perth Concert Hall
5 Adelaide Opera Theatre
8 Mt Gambier Civic Centre
9 Warrnambool Arts Centre
10 Ballarat Civic Hall;
11 Melbourne Ford Theatre
15 Warragul Arts Centre
16 Canberra Southern Cross Club
THE GO-BETWEENS
28 Cabbage Tree Hotel, W
29 Selinas
30 Sheiks
31 Newcastle
2 Cabarita Beach Hotel
3 Ipswich Tav
5 Easts Leagues, Brisbane
6 Playroom
JOHN HAMMOND
Aug 28 Union Hall, Adelaide
29, 30 Prince of Wales Hotel, Melb
31 Universal Theatre, Fitzroy
Sept 2-4 The Basement, Sydney
INXS
Sept 16, 18, 19 Brisbane Ent. Cent
21 Bruce Stadium, Canberra
24-27 Festival Hall, Melb
29, 30 Apollo Ent. Centre, Adelaide
ELTON JOHN
Nov 6, 7 Brisbane Ent. Centre
10to13, 15to 18 Melb. Ent.Cent
21 Westlakes Stadium, Adelaide
25, 26 Perth Ent. Centre
Dec 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 Sydney Ent. Cent
CYNDI LAUPER
Sept 26 Sydney Ent. Centre
27 Sydney Ent. Centre
Oct 3 Brisbane Ent. Centre
5, 6 Melb Ent. Centre
JOHN MAYALL & THE BLUES BREAKERS
Oct 15 Coffs Harbour Ex Services
16 Mooloolabah H
17 Calamvale H, Brisbane
18 Seagulls
19 Kuranda Ampitheatre
21 Byron Bay Arts Factory
22 N'Castle Workers Club
23 Canberra Theatre
24 Shellharbour Wrokers
25 Selinas
26 Perth Concert Hall
28 Hobart Uni
29 Lady Bay H, Warrnambool
30 The barton Town Hall
(further dates next issue)
THE MODELS
Aug 28 Sweethearts
29 Revesby Workers Club
Sept 2 Powerhouse, Toowoomba
3 Bombay Rock
4 Stewarts H, Alexandria Headlands
5 Roxy, Bris
6 Cabarita H, Lismore
9 Tamworth Workers Club
10 N/Castle Workers Club
11 Central Coast Lgs Club
12 Sutherland Ent. Centre
13 Selinas (further dates next issue)
STEVIE NICKS
Sept 24, 25, Sydney Ent. Centre
27 Boondall Ent. Centre, Bris
29, 30 Melb. Festival Hall
Oct 3 Perth Ent. Centre
SIMPLE MINDS/DO RE MI
Oct 18 Perth Ent. Centre
20, 21 The barton Theatre, Adelaide
22, 31, Nov 1 Melb Ent. Centre
24, 29 Sydney Ent. Centre
25 Canberra Nat. Indoor Stadium
27 Brisbane Ent. Centre

NSW

AMAZING WOOLLOOMOOLOOSERS
28 Kardomah Cafe
THE ANGELS
28 Newcastle Workers
29 Central Coast Lgs Club
30 Bankstown RSL
31 Avalon Beach RSL
APOCALYPSE
30 Hills Inn
5 Royal H, Sutherland
ASSASIN
6 Hills Inn Tav
BABY LOVES TO CHA CHA
28 UNity Hall Hotel
29 Fannys, Newcastle
3, 10 Blue Moon Room, Kings Cross
4 City Limits, Hornsby
5 Seven Hills Inn
BAMBOO CURTAIN
28 Victoria H, Marrickville
2, 9 Cat & Fiddle
3, 10 St Leonards Tav
BEATNIX
28 Manly H
29 Mittagong RSL
30 Patchez, W'Gong
31 Kincumber H
1 P'Matta Park
4 Flashez
5 Sydney Cove Tav
6 Campbelltown RSL
10 Sweethearts
BELL JAR
29, 3 Music Cafe
30 Cotton Club
BELLY DANCE
29 Piccadilly H
BIG DEAL
29, 4 Shanney's, Hurstville
30 Illawarra Leagues Club
BLUNT INSTRUMENTS
3 Mosman H
DAVID BOND
29 Richmond Inn
30 Illawarra Leagues Club
31 Vicar of Wakefield
31 Caringbah Inn
2, 9 Queens Hotel
GRAHAME BOND SHOW
28 Sheik's Ermington
BOOM CRASH OPERA
30 Parklea Mkt. Gardens
BOOZE BROS
7 Blue Room Kings Cross
BO-WEEVILS
27 Piccadilly H
28 Hopetoun H
29 Sylvania H
30 Sandringham H (arvo)
Vulcan H (night)
BOY ROCKING
29 Selinas
BROKEN SILENCE
28 Collingwood Inn, Liverpool
CYRIL B. BUNTER
340, 6 Blue Room, Kings Cross
BURNING AIRLINES
28 Mosman H
THE BUSHWACKERS
2 Didi's
3 Sweethearts
6 Sheiks
7 Caringbah Inn
BYTCH
4 St James Tav
CAMRA'S IN PARIS
3 Kardomah Cafe
CARBON COPY
6 Union Hotel, Gosford
THE CARDIGANS
6 Mosman H
THE CHALLENGE
29 St George Budapest Soccer Cl
4 Didi's
5 Bay Hotel, Bonnells Bay
6 Connections, Maitland
CHASIN THE TRAIN
1, 8 Blue Moon Room, Kings Cross
6 Feathers
CHEQUES IN THE MAIL
28 Tolgate H
29 Banjo's
30 Simon's
CHOIRBOYS
28 N'Castle Workers
29 Central Coast Lgs Club
30 Parklea Mkt Gardens
31 Nth Cronulla H
CLICHE
28 Dandalbo H
29 Connections
30 Austral Bowling Club
31 Leumeah Inn
4 Sefton H
5 Mittagong RSL
6 Patchez, W'Gong
THE COCKROACHES
29, 30 Sydney Cove Tav
CRASH POLITICS
28 Sweethearts
29 Revesby Workers
7 Lismore
9 Tamworth Workers Club
10 N'Castle
CROWDED HOUSE
28 Tiffanys
29 Canberra Labour Club
30 W'Gong Town Hall
31 Caringbah Inn
CRYPTICS
30 Whitehause Inn, Kingsford
THE CRYSTAL SET
3 Hills Inn
6 Cotton Club
THE CUCKOOS
30 Bankstown RSL
STEPHEN CUMMINGS
3, 4 Tivoli
DAYTIME ACTORS
28 Revesby Workers
THE DEADLY HUME
28 Piccadilly H
DEAR ENEMY
4 Tracks
3 Kardomah Cafe
4 Caringbah Inn
5 St MArys Band Club
6 Corrimal Lgs Club
7 Leumeah Inn
DAVE DEBS
29, 5 Park Inn Hotel,
6 Regent Hotel, City
DEE MINOR
29 Hills Inn
SIMONE DEE & THE DESIRES
6 Huskinson RSL
DEFENDERS
2 El Rancho Hotel, Eastwood
6 Floyds, Northbridge
DEJA VU
30 Metropolitan Hotel, City
7 Rosehill Hotel, Granville
DELLTONES
5 Sheik's
DELTOIDS
29 Picton Ent. Centre, Picton
2 Collegians F'ball Club,
6 Croydon Hotel, Croydon
DER STRAZA
28 N'Castle Workers
29 Hills Inn
3 St George Sailing Club
6 Bankstown RSL
7 Cotton Club
DHA & THE CHEMICALS
30 Kardomah Cafe
THE DIGIT
26 Caringbah Inn
29, 5 Alberts Tavern
DO RE ME
29 Selinas
30 Mosman H
6 Cotton Club
DRAGON
6 Sweethearts
MAL EASTICK BAND
28 Banjo's
1, 8 Rose Of Australia H
3 All Nations Club
4 Manly H
5 N'Castle Workers
6 Lucy's Tav
All Nations Club (late)
9 Sydney Uni (lunch)
10 Cotton Club
EASY MONEY
29 Nth W'Gong H
30 Cambridge Tav
JON ENGLISH & THE FOSTER BROTHERS
5 Canterbury - Hurlst RSL
THE FACTORY RATZ
6 Royal H, Sutherland
FAT TIME
28 Flashez
29 Ettalong Beach
30 Kardomah Cafe
31 Illawarra Master
3 Manly H
4 Wollongong Uni
5 Taree RSL
6 Seabreeze H
7 Kincumber H
FICTION ROMANCE
7 Mosman H
5ITH BUSINESS
27 Cotton Club
FINGER GUNS
4 Royal H, Sutherland
5 Greengate H
7 Cotton Club
THE FISHERMEN
30 Petersham Inn
FOREIGN LEE & THE LEGIONAIRES
29, 5 Broadway Hotel, City
THE FRETS
28 Fantales, Camperdown
29 NEwcastle Workers Club
30 Didi's
31 Nth Cronulla H
3 Spears Point RSL Club
4 Grand H, W'Gong
5 Jewels Tav, Belmont
6 Connections, Maitland
10 Smiggins H
THE GENERATION
28 Feathers
29, 5 P'Matta Lgs Club
30 Sefton H
2 Sheilas
3, 10 Cock & Bull Tav
4 Banjos
6, 9 Sheilas
GO-BETWEENS
30 Sheik's, Ermington
GONDWANALAND
29 Balmain - Rozelle Sports
THE HAPPYS
30 Royal H, Sutherland
HARD ONS
29 Sylvania H
HAREM SCAREM
3 Piccadilly H
THE HART FOUNDATION
29 Collegians,
30 Trappers, Westmead
5 Fanny's, Newcastle
6 Sefton Hotel
HEAD FIRST
28 Cousins, W'Gong
6 Collegians F.C., W'Gong
HEADS TOGETHER
29 Floyds, Northbridge
30 Hotel Bondi - Lounge
31 Harbord Beach Hotel
HEADSTONES
29 Easts Leagues Club
THE HECTIC PETS
6 Sylvania H
THE HIPPOS
2, 9 Kardomah Cafe
THE HIPSTERS
4 Royal H, Sutherland
HIT AFTER HIT
6 Hurstville, Stallions
1, 8 Parramatta, Stallions
5 Picton Ent. Centre
HOODOO GURUS
30 Parklea Mkt Gardens
3, 6, 7 Jindabyne H
HOT DIGGETTY DOGS
28 Hotel Bondi
30 Brookvale Hotel
HOT PURSUIT
30 Sylvania H
HOWARD I KNOW
8 Kardomah Cafe
HUNTERS & COLLECTORS
28 Riverina College, Wagga
29 Shellharbour Workers Cl
30 Parklea Mkt Gardens
INSOMNIAS
28 Royal H, Sutherland
ITCHY FEET
28, 30, 31 Jindabyne H
5 Banjos
6 Sydney Cove Tav
PAUL JAMES
29 Bull & Bush
30 Forest Lodge, Glebe
THE JOHNNYS
4 Newcastle Workers
5 Hotel Manly
6 Selinas
St George Budapest Club
DANIEL JOHNS
28, 31, 2, 4, 7 Observer H
JOURNEYS END
30 Bull & Bush, Baulkham Hills
JUST LIKE THAT
28 Sweethearts
JOHN KENNEDY'S LOVE GONE WRONG
28 St James Tav
30 Mosman H
5 Graphic Arts Club
THE KENTS
29 Royal Oak, Chippendale
30 Kingshead Tav
31 Cotton Club
SALLY KIND BAND
28 Blue Room, Kings Cross
KING CUTS
28 Evening Star H
KINGS CROSS
4 St James Tav
KOMODO
29 Royal H, Sutherland
6 Hills Inn
KOO DE TAH
28 Canberra Royals F.C.
ED KUEPPER & THE YARD GOES ON FOREVER
30 Manzil Room
2 Tivoli
LAUGH IN THE DARK
29 Mortdale H
THE LAYABOUTS
29 Fantales
3, 10 Cat & Fiddle H
LETHAL
30 Hills Inn Tav
LIGHTNING ROCK
30 Hills Inn
5 Royal H, Sutherland
LOTUS
29 Royal H, Sutherland
4 St James Tav
LOVE MINUS ZERO
10 Mosman H
LUCKY DINOSAURS
4 Piccadilly H
LUNAR CIRCUS
4 Mosman H
MANDU BANDU
5 Evening Star H
MIDNIGHT OIL
30 Parklea Mkt Gardens
MIRRORS
29 Didi's
30 Hornsby Inn, Sydney
THE MOFFS
5 Sylvania H
MONDO ROCK
2 Ballina RSL
3 Glen Innes Dist. Services
4 Tamworth Workers
5 Central Coast Lgs Club
6 Australian Wonderland
7 Tivoli
MOONLIGHTERS
29 Sylvania H
MR SISTER
28 Shanney's, Hurstville
29 Hilton Hotel
31 Nth Wollongong H
2 Cotton Club
3 Blacktown Inn
4 Trappers, Westmead
6 Banjo's, Gladesville
9 Hurstville, Stallions
MUSTARD CLUB
6 Piccadilly H
THE McKENZIES
3 Mosman H
NAKED LUNCH
5 Sylvania H
NAUGHTY RHYTHMS
29 Caringbah Inn
NIGHTMOVES
5 Sylvania H
NOISEWORKS
31, 7 Kardomah Cafe
NO LAUGHING MATTER
6 Hotel Manly
NON STOP DANCERS
28 Tiffanys
29 W'Gong Town Hall
31 Caringbah Inn
6 Mudgee Community Hall
NO WORRIES
29 Vicar of Wakefield,
7 Mona Vale Hotel,
OCEAN BY OCEAN
29 Evening Star H
ONE TOUCH
28 Caringbah Inn
JEREMY OXLEY'S FISHERMEN
6 Mosman H
PARDON ME BOYS
29, 30 Hip Hop Club
PARKIN ZONE
29 El Rancho Hotel,
PASS THE BUCK
29 St George Hotel,
PENGUINS ON SAFARI
3 Harold Park H
THE PERSUADERS
28 Propaganda Club
30 Tathra H
5 Caringbah Inn
PERU
29 Illawarra Leagues Club
30 Connections, Maitland
5 Hornsby RSL Club
6 Shanney's, Hurstville
PESO KIM
30 Evening Star H (early)
5 Frenches Tav
6 Elswick H, Leichhardt
THE PHONES
4, 5, 6 Hip Hop Club
PINKSLIPS
30 Harold Park H
2 Tivoli
PINX LIPP
28 Banjos
29 Woolloomooloo Bay H
30 City Limits, Hornsby
3, 10 Belfield H
6 Petersham Inn
PORCELAIN BUS
3 Music Cafe
4 Mortdale H
THE POTATOES
6 Sylvania H
THE PRANKSTERS
10 Mosman H
PSYCHOTIC TURNBUCKLES
5 Patchez
6 Selinas
THE PUMP
7 Leumeah Inn
THE RADIATORS
30 Parklea Mkt Gardens
REBOP
1 Kardomah Cafe
THE REELS
28 Tivoli
THE RIVALS
29 Whitehouse Inn,
ROCKIN' REDBACKS
29 Royals F.C. Canberra
30 Tuggeranong F.C.
31 Thredbo Alpine Lodge
ROLLING CLONES
10 Manly Hotel
RUN RUN
4 Mortdale H
SAINTS
29 Caringbah Inn
THE SCREAMING TRIBESMEN
3 Hills Inn
4 Mosman H
5 Sylvania H
6 Kardomah Cafe
7 Manuka Football Club
8-14 Ki-Konga
16 Mnaly H
17 Sydney Uni (lunch)
4, 5 Kardomah Cafe
SHATSI
29, 30 Pastel's
THE SHINDIGGERS
10 Piccadilly H
18 Tivoli
19 Macquarie Uni
SCRIBBLE
29 Selinas
3, 4 Tivoli
10 Kardomah Cafe
SECRET SEVEN
29 Victoria H, Marrickville
SILK & THE SLATTERNS
5 Piccadilly H
THE 69-ERS
28 Didi's Brookvale
30 Shanneys, Hurstville
4 Bull & Bush H, Baulkham Hills
5 Shanneys, Hurstville
6 Bondi Tram
SITTING PRETTY
28 Castle Inn, Campsie
5 Trains Bar & Bistro, Rockdale
THE SKOLARS
29 Hopetoun H
6 Evening Star H
THE SLAUGHTERMEN
30 Piccadilly H
SLIP DOWN HOUSE
5 Mosman H
THE SMELLY TONGUES
28 Royal H, Sutherland
GEORGE SMILOVICI
30 Ashfield Polish Club
SONS OF GUNS
5 Patchez
6 Kardomah Cafe
SOUTHERLY BUSTER & THE FABULOUS BUSTETTES
29 Sefton H
30 Seabreeze H, Nelsons Bay
31 Blue Boar Inn, Bowral
SPEAK EASY
29 Auburn RSL
30 Bondi Tram
SPY V SPY
30 Parklea Mkt Gardens
PETER STANIS CONT.
29 Bold Face Stag,
STAR CLUB
6 Selinas
8 Tivoli
STILLS
28 Crescent Tav, Fairfield
29 HArbord Beach Hotel,
30 Epping Hotel, Epping
4 Crescent Tavern, Fairfield
5 Highwaymans Hotel,
7 Feathers, Crows Nest
SUNDOGS
29 Mosman H
SURF CITY
UNDERGROUND
30 Caringbah Inn
SURPRISE SURPRISE
5 Mosman H
SWANEE
3 St George Sailing Club
6 Bankstown RSL
SWINGSHIFT
28 Promises, Sylvania
29 Queanbeyan Lgs Club
30 Goulburn Workers Club
31 Sweethearts
4 Promises, Sylvania
TACTICS
30 Sheik's, Ermington
TALL SHIRTS
3 Piccadilly H
TALL TALES & TRUE
4 Evening Star H
TANGO BRAVO
5 Central Coast Lgs Club
7 Tivoli
TOP CAT REVUE
31 Caringbah Inn
TORRID ZONE
28, 4, 6 Hilton Hotel
29 Parramatta, Stallions
5 Hurstville, Stallions
TOUGH LUXURY
28 Caringbah Inn
30 The Palais, Newcastle
TOYS WENT BESERK
30 Royal H, Sutherland
THE TRILOBITES
30 Sydney Trade Union Club
TROPICAL PENGUINS
4 Caringbah Inn
6 Kardomah Cafe
CHRIS TURNER BIG ROCK BAND
29, 5 Blue Moon, Kings Cross
TWIST HOPS
31 Avalon Beach RSL
UPS & DOWNS
28 Mortdale H
29 Kardomah Cafe
VEGEMITE REGGAE
28 Station Street, Penrith
29 Bondi Tram
19 Sheilas, North Sydney
11 Cotton Cub
VICIOUS KITES
28 Music Cafe
3 Harold Park H
VISHOUS FISHES
31 Piccadilly H
THE VULTEES
30 Royal H, Sutherland
A.T. WELLS
29 Toronto Bowling Club
30 Swansea Workers
WET ONES
29 Sylvania H
31 Hopetoun H
WHITE WIDOW
6 Hills Inn
WOLVED ISIS
4 Caringbah Inn
WIMPY BLIMP
3, 4, 5 Jindabyne H
WOGANOZI
28 Duke of Edinburgh H
1 Pine Inn
3 Great Northern Hotel
4 Merino Tavern
5 Ruse Tavern
6 Promises
7 Richmond Inn
10 Bull & Bush Hotel
X
28 Mortdale H
30 Sydney Trade Union Cl
YARD ANIMALS
29 Mortdale H
30 Cococabana, Wagga
9 Cotton Club
10 Tracks, Epping
YOUNG HEARTS
28 Hornsby Inn
29 Cumberland College
30 Station St
5 Revesby Workers
6 Sydney Cove Tav
YOUR FANATICS
28 Caringbah Inn
29 St Mary's Band Club
30 Manly H
31 Manaka F.C.
3 Flashez
4 Sheilas
5 Seabreeze H
6 Dapto Lgs Club
7 Fannys, N'Castle
ZIPPITY DO DAH SHOWBAND
28, 2 Stallions, Hurstville
29 Station St. Penrith
30 Campbelltown
4, 19 Hurstville, Stallions
5 Bondi Tram
6 Picton Ent. Centre
7 Nth W'Gong H

VIC

BOOM CRASH OPERA
28 Bell St Rock Olympic H
29, 30 The Club
BO WEEVILS
30 Grosvenor H
TONY CATZ BAND
28 Eureka H, Richmond
THE CRYSTAL SET
29, 30 The Club
31 Eureka H, Richmond
STEPHEN CUMMINGS
29, 30 Kooroora Hotel Chalet
DEAR ENEMY
28 Shepparton H
29 Dorset Gardens H
30 Coco's
DEKADANCE
28 Village Green H
29 The Centre Club H, Morwell
30 Excelsior H/Motel
FICTITIOUS CHARACTERS
28 Grosvenor H
FREANKIE J HOLDENS "BIG NIGHT OUT"
29 Eureka H, Richmond
GEISHA
29 Shepparton H
30 Continental H
GRAVE ROBBERS
22 Prince Of Wales H
HEP CATS
30 Dava H
HUNTERS CREEPERS
28 John Pascoe Faulkner H, Broadmeadows
29 Central Club H
30 Village Green H, (early) Seaview Ballroom (late)
31 Eureka H, Richmond
I SPIT ON YOUR GRAVY
6 Armidale H
ITCHY RAT
29 Music Station, Central Cl
LIVING DELIGHTS
30 Brickmaker Arms H
LOONEE TUNES
29 Nth Melb Football Club
MANNIKINS
29 Sundowner H
PAINTERS & DOCKERS
29, 30 Royal Saxon H
PARTY BOYS
28 Village Green H
29 The Venue
30 Excelsior H/Motel
31 Sundowner H
THE PONY
29 Sydenham H, Richmond
THE RARIES
3 The Tote
4 Central Club H
5 The Users Club
6 Seaview Ballroom
ROLLING CLONES
3 Eureka H, Geelong
4 Shepparton H
5 Tropicana
6 Coco's
THE SAINTS
4 Go Fast Club
6 Music Station
SCREAMING AT PIGEONS
28 Grosvenor H
STEPHEN SCULLY
THE THIN MAN
29 Grosvenor H
SHINDIGGERS
30 Seaview Ballroom
SPANIARDS
28 Cramers
29 Moonee Ponds Tav
30 Corner H
SPECIAL SCHOOL
29 Grosvenor H
TALK THAT WALK
30 Sundowner H
UPS & DOWNS
4 Go Fast Club
URBAN GUERILLAS
6 Music Station, Central Club H
10 Rusden State College
11 Deakin Uni
12 The Venue
VELVET FOGG
30 Grosvenor H
VOODOO LUST
28 Prince Of Wales
29 Sydenham H,
30 Seaview Ballroom
WAZOO
29 Dava H
30 Shepparton H
JOHN PAUL YOUNG & THE ALLSTAR BAND
1 The Roxy, Sth Melb
2 Shepparton H
3 Lady Bay H, Warrnambool
4 Boundry H, East Bently
5 Barwon Heads H
6 Cohuna H
7 Western Port H

QLD

ALOA PUSSY CATS
29 Q.I.T.
BAM BALAMS
29 Q.I.T.
30 Love Inn
31 Playroom
DIED PRETTY
29 Q.I.T.
30 Love Inn
31 Playroom
EMMANUEL BROTHERS
30 Gympie Country Muster
1 Melbourne H, Bris
2, 3 Kirra Beach H
5 Calamvale H
6 Caesars Palace, Ipswich
MONDO ROCK
28 Darling Downs I.A.E.
29 The Roxy
30 Bombay Rock
31 Sunnybank H
THE SCREAMING TRIBESMEN
28 Ferny Grove H
29 Easts Leagues Club
30 Jet Club
31 Stewarts, Alexandra Headlands
SPARKLERS
3 Griffith Uni
4 Q.I.T.
5 Love Inn
6 Jet Club
THE SLIFFS
29, 5 Battle Of The Bands, T'ville
30, 31 Magnetic Is Sports & Rec Club
6 Kalamie H, Ayr
WIZARDS
30 Bombay Rock

TAS

HUNTERS & COLLECTORS
5 City Limits Nightclub
6 Uni of Tasmania, Hobart

WA

STEVE TALLIS UNIT
29, 5 Fitzgeralds
30, 31, 6 Castles Red Parrot
7 Casties (late)
7 Subiaco (early)

SA

COUNTERFEIT
29 Sundowner H, Whyalla
30 Campbelltown Blue Light
DR DAMAGE
30 Marquee Room, Colonnades
GREAT WALL
30 Marquee Room, Colannades
LATENT DEBRIS
29 Bridgeway H
MACBETH
30 Marquee Room, Colonnades
RITZEE BOULEVARD
1 Grenfell Tav
ROLLING CLONES
28 Locklee's
29 West Augusta Football Club
30 Millville H
31 Bay Disco
1 Elizabeth Tav
SOLID FRONT
29 The grosvenor Hindmarsh

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FRI 5	TERRY SERIO & WILD BLUE YONDER
SAT 6	SCREAMING TRIBESMEN/SONS OF GUNS/ TROPICAL PENGUINS
SUN 7	NOISEWORKS
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While we worked through our recent series on local independent labels, POWDERWORKS was busily sorting out its identity crisis. Having done so, the future looks bigger and brighter for this country's oldest indie. But what of the up-and-comers? Ask J.J. ADAMS, who exhausted industry sources and her phone bill to bring you an update on the also-rans — the future is now!

POWDERWORKS
A Case Of Mistaken Identity

THE MORE things change, the more they stay the same. With the year rapidly drawing to a close, the Australian independent music scene seems to be undergoing another boom, with more labels appearing under increasingly weirder names (eg No Penis, No God) than ever before.

But their gripes — pressing woes, distribution hassles and lack of mainstream airplay — have a distressingly familiar ring for those who remember earlier indie label booms.

It remains to be seen if the lessons learnt by the vanished labels of the past have been acknowledged by their descendants. Because to survive, the new independents will have to meet old challenges — learn basic business, legal and promotional skills, gain a name for reliability of delivery dates, balance the idealistic against the practical. There's also lessons to be learnt in establishing a high standard of artwork/presentation, in the need to avoid overcommitment and the headaches of stretching resources too thin. And *please* — no more tiny colour photos or xeroxed shots in lieu of usable 8x10 print-quality band pix!

Here's a brief A to Z nod to new and revived labels, and a credit to those who have been hidden in the shadow of their better-known colleagues.

NSW

BLACK FLAG: Pressing problems have delayed the release of works by **A Few, Glam Savages,** Minneapolis band **Soul Asylum** and the **Woods** (from North Carolina), but spokesman **John Moyle** says it's a label to watch — with no connections to US punk band of the same name.

BULB RECORDS: Founded in late 1985, Bulb has already released records and tapes by the **Deadly Hume,** the **Fester Brothers** and the **Craven Fops,** all recorded in such homely surroundings as basements and balconies. Plans are afoot for similarly grassroots film clips — "if the bands come up with the money."

MAMBO RECORDS: Dare Jennings of Phantom fame has started this surf label with an aim to continue on "Australia's great heritage of surf music — and not just the nostalgic sounds, either." The first release is slated for summer, by which time the **Sparklers'** surf song should be appearing on ads for Jennings' **One Hundred Per Cent Mambo** surf clothing company. A December Battle Of The Surf Bands is planned, with each aspirant required to give themselves a "surf name" and perform four surf songs.

METHOD RECORDS: In action since 1980, the label was founded by **Keith Welsh** of Icehouse, whose work commitments later forced him to turn it over to **Fabian Byrne,** a former member of **Fast Cars** and the **Products,** two early releases on the label. Discs by **Personnel** and punk band **Progression Cult** followed, with bands such as the **Skolars, Mustard Club,** the **Leftovers, Surprise Surprise, Box Of Fish** and more recently **Soggy Porridge, Single Gun Theory** and *Star Search* contestants, the **Swinging Teens.** The label has also released cassettes and three compilation albums dubbed ***The Sound Of Sydney.*** With product being distributed through Festival and Citadel, Method plan to release a further album and several singles by the end of 1986.

PAGAN RECORDS: Formed by one-time Waterfronter **Frank Villante,** this label has released records by the **Flies** and **21 Faces** — with more in the offing.

PHANTOM: Yes, Phantom, the label that introduced such as the **Surfside 6,** the **Sunnyboys,** the **Hoodoo Gurus, Machinations** and the **Rockmelons** to the masses has come out of a long hibernation to release a debut single by the **Sparklers** (a Sydney band featuring former members of the Sunny ones). And with label spokesman **Jules Normington** saying there's been a revival of "time and enthusiasm for the demo tapes we're hearing", it looks like the 'big beat from the heart of the vinyl jungle' has started echoing again.

RATTLESNAKE RECORDS: Founded by **Johnny Kannis** and **Alex Gefhos** at the start of 1986, the label has recently released the **Psychotic Turnbuckles'** mini-album — which is into its second pressing within three weeks of its initial release. A **Screaming Tribesmen** album and an EP of **Chris Masuak's** country songs (recorded '77-'78) are planned for release, and distribution licensing for the UK, US and Europe is being pursued.

SURVIVAL RECORDS: Founded in 1982 as a custom pressing service for young bands, Survival later became involved in promotion and releasing records by **Tall Tales And True, Urban Guerillas** and the **Gravity Pirates.** The associated **Survival Music** has released the **Naughty Rhythms** and the **Cuckoos** through a distribution deal with Festival.

VI-NIL: Founded in 1974 by **John Heath** and **Mark Fraser,** this Sydney label debuted with a single by the **Klerks** and has gone on to release singles by the **Lipstick Killers, Conspirators, Psychotic Turnbuckles, Stig Can't Clap** and the **Howling Commandos,** with most success achieved by the **Hard-Ons'** EP.

VICTORIA

They're busy little bees in the garden state. If they're not starting community radio stations, they're starting record labels or clubs. Here's some:

ELVIS RECORDS: Founded at the end of 1984 by **Gavin Purdy,** the label's first three releases were a single, a mini-album and a free flexi-disc featuring the **Shower Scene From Psycho** (the flexi disc also starred **King Jerklews**). 1986 projects include a **This Is Serious Mum** single and 12-inch EP, plus a new single from the **Sacred Cowboys.**

KAVERN 7: Dean Middlehauser, the Geelong man responsible for the excellent *Livin' End* magazine which keeps alive the enthusiasm for Australian 60s music, founded this label "a few months ago". Planning to release "pure 60s sounds", it started with an EP by 1986 band the **Bo-Weevils,** but future plans include an EP of the **Lost Souls** (a Melbourne band recorded '66-'67), a single by San Diego band **Tell Tale Hearts** recorded exclusively for the label and an album of obscure and previously unreleased material from the 60s.

MR SPACEMAN: This busy little label has released mini-albums by the **Cosmic Psychos** and **Seminal Rats,** an **Arctic Circles** single and a single by US band **Blackjacks.**

NO PENIS NO GOD: What a name! The perfect label for teenage punk band **Foot And Mouth** to be working through: ask granny to buy you their record for Christmas, just so she'll have to ask for it over the counter.

PRESTON: Described to me by one source as "primarily a rockabilly label", Preston have also released excellent records by **Sophisticated Boom Boom** and the **Shindiggers.** A label to watch.

REACTOR: Not a label for the faint-hearted or those into easy listening, Reactor have released EPs by bands wearing cheery monikers like **Depression, Perdition, Permanent Damage, Vicious Circle** and **Youth Brigade,** as well as two albums. Watch for a disc from all-girl band **Gash,** with a cover that savages an Australian women's magazine.

WEST AUSTRALIA

My contact at Perth's Monkey Music surprised me with the number of names he reeled off during a very expensive phone call. Something is obviously happening over there which hasn't yet been swamped by the yachtees' set...

CHERRY TOP: The label responsible for releasing the wonderful **Marigolds** EP, as well as singles from the **Kryptonics,** the **Russians,** and **And An A** (a band, not a spelling exercise). They've also put out two cassettes.

EASTER RECORDS: Home of the **Scientists'** first album (the original band), the **Holy Rollers'** single and a cassette by **German Humour.**

WARP RECORDS: Associated with folk label **Homegrown** Records, this label has released albums by the **Helicopters** and singer **Errol Tout.**

Also mentioned were **Brian Dentus'** heavy metal label which has released the **Trilogy** album and a record by progenitors **Saracen,** the folk-orientated **Kitchen Records** and the Bungarra bands' label. **Monkey Music** may also be starting their own label.

MISSING IN ACTION:

Tasmania (we need a contact), Northern Territory (ditto) and (as always) my home state of Queensland, of which a contact at Brisbane's **Kent Records** sadly said "is getting better — but not much". Anyone missed along the way can contact us during the five years it'll take us to build up the energy to attempt this whole thing again.

J.J. ("Oh god, the phone bill's here again!") ADAMS

POWDERWORKS Records has suffered in the past from an identity crisis — a major indie label. It started 15 years ago as M7 Records, formed by a consortium of radio stations, the Fairfax Group and Channel Seven, at a time when radio was battling the major labels over payments for playing their product. M7 became 7 Records, and then Powderworks when general manager Ken Harding and friends bought out the other interests.

If the history sounds confusing, consider the mix of artists and musical styles. It's been the home of cabaret acts, MOR artists, country singers and even children's records. Powderworks was also the first record company for Midnight Oil, and now has a strong stable of rock artists including Spy V Spy, Strange Tenants, Warumpi Band, Gondwanaland Project, Radiators, Club Ska, Secret Society, Sundogs, Ocean By Ocean and the Notations. It's that sort of product mix that has confused retailers as to what Powderworks *is* — rock or easy rolling — and the lack of a cohesive image is something the new owners of Powderworks are aiming to improve.

In May, Harding sold the company (which includes a pressing plant and tape duplication facility) to Gabler Bailees Australia P/L, a Melbourne merchant banker and corporate risk management company that also has an interest in the satellite communications business. It may sound like a case of strange bedfellows, but realise that the heavy money out there in the market is looking more and more at the entertainment world for investment potential.

Gabler Bailees is excited by the acquisition and has appointed John Evans to head up the company as it increases production capabilities and expands its roster, while dividing up the diverse musical styles through internal label changes. There are plans as well for an independent distribution network as an adjunct to their current deal with RCA Records.

It's a mammoth task for Evans, who was one of the founders of J&B Records — arguably Australia's most successful TV marketer of records. Evans has an extensive past in the music industry, having also set up an independent distribution network in South Australia, managed artists and run a pressing and tape duping operation. But some results from the management changeover are already apparent.

For instance, Powderworks purchased record presses and cassette duplicators from PolyGram New Zealand when it closed recently — a move which will more than double Powderworks' production capabilities.

As Evans says, "Not only do the major labels here have trouble getting their product manufactured, but with the suspension of Custom Records at EMI, the indie labels and individual artists lost their ability to get product in small lots. We aim to service both markets and are especially going after the custom records business."

But getting records pressed is one thing for an indie, or an indie band. Then there's the problem of distribution. Evans addresses that by saying, "As a label, we have been fortunate in having RCA as our distributor. But they can't take everything we produce, only more established artists. So we are planning to establish a nationwide distribution network for ourselves and other indies. Most of us use the same shippers, warehouses and agents, but individually don't have the clout to reduce costs. Now is the time to consolidate and set up an alternative to the majors' distribution which hasn't always been open to small labels and individual artists."

He hastens to add that Powderworks will remain with RCA for their major releases.

As part of their internal restructuring, Powderworks has established a new label, Abstract, which will handle budget product. Evans plans to either keep the rock roster on Powderworks and establish another label for more MOR acts, or have a separate contemporary label and move the rock side over to it.

Evans has appointed an A & R director to scout talent for label signings. The choice is Jon Kennett, who was A & R head of RCA and is a noted songwriter and producer. Aside from poring through the piles of tapes for potential direct signings, Kennett will also be looking at pressing and distribution deals or licensing of product from Australia and other territories.

When Powderworks consolidate their currently separate pressing and tape plants into a new facility with the arrival of the New Zealand gear, a rehearsal and demo studio will be added for artists on the Powderworks family of labels to hone their chops before going into major studios for recording and prior to touring.

As Evans puts it, "If we want to take Australian music overseas, it has to be recorded at the highest standards. But with the Third World budgets that Oz bands are allotted, it's best to get them ready for the studio to maximise their time in there and use the budget to bring the standard of recording up."

Evans has a few more tricks up his sleeve as he transforms Powderworks into a powerhouse, but he's leaving those for after Christmas when the new plant and offices are in place. But he plans to give the major labels a run for their money, and hopes to show how vital indies are to the market.

"In a way, we are more a record company than many of the majors — our own pressing and tape plants, internal A & R, promotion and publicity... and now we have the finance to make some real waves in the market."

FRED HILL

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LUCKY DINOSAURS

How's Our Pedigree?

THE Lucky Dinosaurs couldn't hope for a better Sydney 'inner-city' pedigree, with members drawn from Climbing Frame, Swinging Moods, Bring Philip, Birth of Mirtha and other more obscure entities. Indeed, they are just one of a network of up and coming local acts that includes the likes of Yapocks, Falling Bodies, I'm Spartacus and Just A Drummer.

(Pic: Ivan Rogers)

Too diverse to constitute a 'sound' in the Brisbane sense, and too individual to constitute the slave-to-fashion 'scenes' that tend to characterise Melbourne, Lucky Dinosaurs are happy to characterise themselves as part of this enclave. Says drummer Peter Brookes: "I think the difference is a lot of Sydney bands we know want to get things done by themselves; they organise their own shows, they bother to do certain things to put on a good show."

"And if you set up your own network," continues singer Lea Cameron, "you don't have to rely on arseholes..."

"...Like record companies and management and things like that," Brookes adds.

"I don't know so much about a 'co-operative' of bands," says Michael Sherman, Lucky Dinosaurs' trumpeter and synth-player (ex Climbing Frame and Bring Philip). "Everyone seems to do their own thing... I mean, we know what we're doing and why we're doing it, but all these bands are just nicer people, basically — so when you deal with them and play with them, you want to do it all again because they respect you and they're not competitive."

Another thing the Lucky Dinosaurs share with the 'network' is their rejection of the dominant boys' own rockist mentality — countered by the prominence of women musicians in most of these bands...

Yet Lea Cameron is quick to reject the 'girl singer' stereotype. "It's not just a matter of having a female singer, it's female *anybody*. Sometimes I find it really daunting when we're rehearsing, because there used to be other women in the band and I really miss it."

Another singer, Louise, left the band, and violinist Amanda Brown was pinched by the Go-Betweens.

"People have that attitude, 'Oh yeah, she's a lead singer, she's a girl, she's supposed to do certain things because she's playing that role.' I think there's a focus on the lead singer anyway, because you're at the front of the band and you have to sap in how the audience is reacting."

At full strength, Lucky Dinosaurs are a formidable eight-piece punching out rough and rhythmic funk lines — carried though not tamed by a horn section featuring former Swinging Moods Greg Flannery and Lindsay. The coming together of multiple influences and the singular passion of eight people produces a sound wherein familiar things are more often alluded to or glimpsed momentarily through the fabric, than made readily apparent.

Yet pervading their work is a sense of almost medieval strangeness in Lea Cameron's chanting vocals and the somewhat baroque ornamentation of the arrangements — particularly on songs like *Friends*.

Says Peter Brookes: "A lot of the music is reflective, but it's not completely insular."

"That song is particularly melancholy," offers Sherman.

"I think maybe it's the chant element," Lea decides.

"There was a period when we were going through a kind of Islamic semi-Eastern thing too. Michael is a real fan of East African and different ethnic musics."

All of which can't prove too familiar to your average punter, although Michael Sherman says they're generally very well-received. "Maybe that's the reason, the fact that we do have lots and lots of influences."

"That's the interest and the strength of it," continues Peter Brookes, "because there's a few people involved, there's a lot of different styles and tastes and nobody's really told what to do. Like Adam, the guitar player — he's definitely funky and into his style, but that doesn't dominate Lucky Dinosaurs and the same can be said of anybody."

Are Lucky Dinosaurs an 'alternative' band then?

"We're just one of many," says Brookes. "I think we fit in with bands like Yapocks, Falling Bodies, Cargo Cult, that sort of grouping."

"I think our music is an alternative to a lot of bands," considers Sherman. "There's far more bands that have things in common —like there's definitely swamp and rockabilly, sixties, bluegrass and country, whereas I don't think we're particularly anything."

"It's not for a specific audience and you don't have to dress a particular way to turn up to a gig," adds Lea Cameron, helpfully.

One of the pleasant surprises of the last Lucky Dinosaurs gig saw the introduction of their first cover — the Stones' *Paint It Black*. Though it must be one of the most unlikely choices — picked because "everyone knows it, everyone likes it, it's a great song and it's easy to play" — Brian Jones's original arrangement fits the Lucky Dinosaurs like a glove.

With four excellent demos recorded, the Dinosaurs are hoping to strike vinyl in the near future once the usual barriers of "money, time and general co-ordination" are overcome. Meanwhile, keep an eye out for the pleasure of their live company. You won't be alone...

MARK CAREY

COSMIC PSYCHOS

Feedback-To-Back

THEY'RE hard and fast, loud and mean and mighty unclean. Melbourne's sons of psychedelic thrash, wa wa and feedback, the Cosmic Psychos, are the complete antithesis of fashion, trends and Image.

Yet their debut EP of last year, *Down On The Farm* made the alternative charts in not only Australia but Sweden, Germany, England, Italy and America. Before that, the band's *Custom Credit* demo tape had entrenched itself in Melbourne public radio rankings for nigh on seven months. *Down On The Farm* even made it to the No. 6 spot on a Detroit college chart, and the Psychos were hailed as the 'new Stooges' by an Italian fanzine based in Milan. Others described the band as 'Flipper-esque', whilst they've been touted around the traps as 'the Velvet Underground of the 80s'.

Through it all, they've remained untouched by the hype.

"We didn't adopt certain poses, looks or attitude," says guitarist Peter Jones ('Dirty' to his friends). "We're finding that more and more people are coming to accept us. Maybe our image of ourselves and other people's is different — like we were once described as 'hardy perennials', and it's not as though we've been around all that long either."

"It was kind of suggesting that despite all that's been thrown at us and despite the environment and prevailing conditions, we're still around," qualifies drummer Bill Walsh, a Political Science graduate. "Also the idea of what a good band is supposed to look and play like, we undercut all that."

"A lot of people say though that we're too slack and that we don't work hard enough," adds Peter. "There's this feeling we could be really good, or better, if we worked on it more."

Over dinner at the Cosmic Psychos' flat in seedy St Kilda, we're pondering the paradox that sets this renegade trio apart from most of their Melbourne contemporaries. Absent is bassist Ross Knight — the Psychos' resident joker and social commentator — but not for long. He rings during the interview to explain his alibi: "I'm phoning from New York... yeah, yeah, I'm organising my solo tour. You're gonna have to speak up, I can hardly hear you!" He was playing soccer in outer Werribee, more like it.

All three of the band share lead vocals, eschewing cover versions in favour of their own uniquely twisted approach to lyrics. And each prefers to deliver his own, while we're on the subject. Check these for examples: *You drove me up the wall/I ain't no spider/ (Custom Credit)*, or song titles like *Tell Me That You Love Me, Tell Me That I Stink* or *I Wanna Be Like David Lee Roth*, with its touching line — *'Do you want me for my money or do you want me for my lead break honey?'* Other gems from an ever-expanding repertoire include *Gangrene Dream, Rain On You, Down On The Farm, Decadence* and a new song inspired by the space shuttle disaster, called *74 Seconds* — *'If you want a piece of bone/if you want a piece of rocket/go down to the beach/and put it in your pocket'*, goes the jaunty chorus.

Despite such cocky humour, Bill for one is well aware of the dangers of misinterpretation. "It presents a bit of a risk if the lyrics are taken out of context," he considers. Adds Peter: "It's like those jokes about Chambers and Barlow — that irreverent thing, where you joke about something you just *don't* joke about."

"I just reckon we come up with songs that challenge people to think about things, if they haven't already thought about them," says Bill.

One thing the Cosmic Psychos have never thought about is recruiting a lead vocalist... "I remember in our first year together, people were always onto us about getting a singer and how we'd be better with one," recalls Peter. "But really it was because we couldn't be bothered — there was no real impetus for us to get somebody in, or that we were so bad we *had* to get somebody. We all like singing anyway, and besides, singers are always ego-manical.

"It was as though we decided that anybody who wanted to be the singer wouldn't be anyone we would be able to put up with. And also when you have a singer, where you play and they sing, it's kinda like you're only the backing band. I guess we're egomaniacs to not let that happen with us."

The Cosmic Psychos don't feel the need to compromise or concern themselves with peer approval — it's that very characteristic that has earnt them respect and a lasting quality.

BILL: "One of the problems we had in the early days was that there wasn't an immediate reference point to our music, and that's a real thing in Melbourne — there has to be a reference point. People seem to have to be able to categorise you to understand you or something."

"But a lot of people have to be told by *somebody else* that you're good as well," adds Peter.

That's no longer a problem. For now, the Psychos are engaged in recording their first full-length album — again for the Mr Spaceman label. There's an American licensing deal in the wind, with the What Goes On label, already assisting Died Pretty, Ups & Downs, Screaming Tribesmen and the Celibate Rifles in their overseas push, and the Cosmic Psychos are well aware what success afar could mean...

And when it happens, they'll be deemed to have waited long enough.

MARA SMARRELLI

VICIOUS KITES

CALL it an invasion if you like, but Sydney is currently reeling from an unprecedented influx of bands from the north. Most would simply point to necessity as the prime reason for escaping the hothouse political climate of Brisbane, a place where venues are scarce and musicians are nervous.

In the last year or so, Sydney has become the logical destination for such ambitious outfits as Ups & Downs, Let's Go Naked, the Kents and Peso Kim... All have met with varying success, though Ups & Downs have broken through relatively quickly. Lately tipped to dog their sure-footed steps are the Vicious Kites, initially held back due to a certain understandable confusion over their name.

Says Gerard Lacheca, lead vocalist, guitarist and harmonica player: "At first, a lot of people thought that because of our name, we were a punk band — or we played thrash or something. We got a lot of shit for it."

That uncertain beginning came in late '84, although the Vicious Kites soon established themselves in Brisbane as a premier live act. Problem was, they outgrew the place just as quickly...

"Brisbane... Well, what can I say?" says Gerard with typical northern laconicism. "There's not much of an independent scene by way of venues. When we were up there, there were about four or five places we could play at; and now it looks like there are only two left. A lot of places have been pulled down, and there were between 50 and 60 original independent bands up there."

Obviously, the cream has to rise to the top. Rather than risk an overflow, Brisbane bands are forced to hold back to avoid over-exposure in a limited market. With the support of local independent FM radio station 4ZZZ, in its dual guise as the city's only adventurous concert promoter, the Kites were allotted regular headlining gigs judiciously alternated with a range of top-notch support slots — with such as the Hoodoo Gurus, Dynamic Hepnotics and John Cooper Clarke, to name a few. Though these naturally elevated the band's already growing live reputation, it was no easy road. As Gerard says of Brisbane audiences, "They're pretty apathetic at the best of times! I think it's the whole town in general — you get dragged down. I suppose you could say that about any city really, but it's just so *small*. I never realised how small Brisbane was until I got here."

The Vicious Kites first brought their sharp-edged pop to Sydney around Christmas '84. Though initial audience reactions were encouragingly positive, the industry at large wasn't quite so accommodating — the bane of many an out-of-town outfit. Seems you have to prove yourself on more than one level to be allowed the right to exist...

"We got ripped off really badly," recalls Gerard of that rueful experience. "But it wasn't a failure by any means. We didn't get booed off stage and we didn't get harassed —we proved we could do it, and we were still very much unknown in Brisbane. Then 4ZZZ asked us to come down with their Roadshow in '85; we'd have liked to have stayed, but some people in the band were unsure of what they wanted to do."

Once back in Brisbane, the Kites strengthened their resolve and vowed to return to Sydney just as soon as finances allowed. This they did in February this year, only to face a renewed uphill battle to obtain work. Naturally, competition was tough — not only from established Sydney bands, but from a fresh influx of like-minded intruders from afar...

"We had to send around our single and stuff, and it was really tough. The people who ran the venues and the promoters were still really apprehensive — they only wanted bands with a big following.

"There are certain people who run about three venues here who won't touch us because we haven't got a huge following as such. But basically, they haven't even seen us; that's well and good I suppose, but it'd be good to play in some of those places... One day. It's all who you know, not what you know in a city like this."

So just who did the Vicious Kites know?

"(Brisbane) bands who were down here and getting continual work, like Ups & Downs and the Skel-E-Tones really helped us a lot. The Brisbane scene down here — and I think there's a big one — well, we've all sort of clung to each other for moral support. It's a good feeling. We've since come together as a unit, and it's still a very friendly situation. It's good, we need that.

"It's the same story, really: the poor, starving musician. You've got to have a day-job just to pay the rent. There's not much else you can do, short of dealing drugs or something..." (No, Gerard has a day-job!)

The Vicious Kites managed to pool resources and enter the studio a few weeks ago, laying down three tracks in the hope of landing a contract. The upshot was a number of offers from a range of local independent labels, but the Kites turned them down! Inexplicable you say, but not when you consider producer Alan Thorne's attractive offer. Having worked with the band on the three songs they recorded,

Gerard Lacheca at extreme right (Pic: Ann Duffield)

Flight Clearance

Thorne was sufficiently impressed to offer the Kites a deal of his own making. He's planning to establish a label, and sees the Vicious Kites as the ideal band to launch it — currently in France organising possible European distribution, Thorne has given the Kites the vital break they need.

You may recall the Vicious Kites released a single late last year — *Speaking Minds/Here With You*, which charted respectably. By the end of the year, they plan to have two more in the shops: one in the next few weeks, and another by Christmas. An EP is also in the offing, should luck and finances prevail. The latter shouldn't prove too much of a problem, given their growing work schedule, whilst the former is well overdue...

"Yeah, I think we've been fairly lucky," laughs Gerard. "Not lucky enough, but..."

RACHAEL FOXTON

UPS & DOWNS

the living kind from the mini album sleepless

THE LIVING KIND

POP ART BY SCRIBBLE

Johanna Pigott is a stealthy achiever.

Since she began playing music in 1979, she has developed into a highly respected singer, songwriter and musician with a list of credits to her name, amongst them the Dragon hit single, Rain and the ABC television series, Sweet And Sour.

In 1983, Johanna began 'scribbling', taking charge of her own songs and seeing them through to vinyl. First of all, Scribble was a studio band, a loose collection of individuals working around Johanna's talents and ideas.

Gradually, Scribble has evolved its own entity, a distinctive sound and style of winsome, witty pop (as evidenced on the So Far album, a collection of songs from 1983-85 compiled and released by Regular Records earlier this year); by 1985 it had become, for Johanna, a full time occupation as she set to work arranging and recording an album's worth of songs.

The result is Pop Art, the brand new Scribble LP.

Produced by Johanna and Todd Hunter, Pop Art uses a basic band of three musicians: Mike Caen (guitar), Lee Borkman (keyboards and keyboard bass) – both from the Sydney band The Pink Slips – and Tim Powles of The Venetians on drums. Johanna and Todd augmented the keyboards and bass and some special guests added their touch: Dave Mason, Lin Buckfield, Julie Conway, Zan, Michael Rose, Keith Stirling and Andrew O.

Four of the ten tracks on Pop Art are mixed by Johanna Pigott and David Hemmings, and six by Iva Davies.

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HERBS

How Green Is Our Peacepipe?

Charlie T. 2nd from left, top row (Pic: Ian Greene)

I WAS last witness to Charlie Tumahai's bass playing more than a decade ago, during the rise to prominence of Be-Bop Deluxe — one of the best exponents of British art rock in the mid-70s. Come the end of the decade, when Be-Bop's Bill Nelson had split the band to pursue a rather more esoteric solo career, Tumahai disappeared down a series of musical cul-de-sacs with the likes of guitarists Mick Taylor and the late Jimmy McCullough.

I was more than a little surprised to hear that on returning to his native New Zealand he had joined forces with Kiwi socio-political reggae band, Herbs. I sought him out in the glamorous surrounds of a certain Bondi motel, and after founding Herb and rhythm guitarist Dilworth Karaka had begrudgingly consented to let me unplug the TV and replace it with a tape recorder, the three of us sat down to talk — while their publicist languished on the bed to monitor the ensuing conversation.

Charlie began by explaining the reasons for his return, last September, to his homeland: "The whole situation was getting real bad in England and I didn't want my kids to grow up there. A few people had told me about Herbs in letters, and I'm actually related to a couple of the band — they come from the same tribe — and soon after my return, I joined them."

"The influence of Charlie is making us aware of things we weren't aware of before he joined," Dilworth pointed out.

Tumahai's lessons learnt from the relative 'big time' days of yore are obviously being put to constructive use. Looking back at Tumahai's previous musical involvements, the smooth Pacific reggae tones of Herbs are something of a musical about-face — considering his relatively 'rockist' past.

"I am playing very different music now. I haven't found it hard to fit in, but it has been hard to get the feel of the music."

You see, the Herbs' brand of Pacific reggae differs from your run-of-the-mill West Indian version, in that it encompasses liberal sprinklings of both calypso and soca which lend it a rolling, summery feel.

"It has a reggae influence, but basically it's party music," explains Dilworth.

But don't let all this happy talk distract you from the fact that there is a definite purpose in what Herbs do. Despite the soothing love songs like *On My Mind* (on their current album, *Long Ago*), they are a politically aware band — with a social conscience to boot.

As Dilworth puts it, "We are aiming for a nuclear-free Pacific. The band forming *(7 years ago)* was born out of frustrations at home — the Maori's frustrations. Our first EP showed the feelings of oppression on the streets."

Mere politicising is not, however, what Herbs are about.

"We just want to make people subtly aware of certain situations through the power of music."

The anti-nuclear stance is obviously their prime political motivation, and to date, their achievements have been fairly impressive for a relatively little-known band. Dilworth cites the government's banning of nuclear-armed ships from New Zealand's waters as being a good example of what can be achieved. It was also no coincidence that a San Francisco radio station chose the Herbs' single *Nuclear Waste* as the theme song for the day, as the radiation leak from Chernobyl made its way across the northern hemisphere. Most recently, Herbs were invited to perform at the Hiroshima Peace Festival in front of 26,000 people.

"The festival has been happening for the past 15 years, but this year they wanted to make it more of an international event," related Charlie.

Apart from Herbs, Graham Nash and David Lindley performed with an assortment of American session musicians. Apparently, Herbs will be returning next year when the plan is to give the event an even greater worldwide profile.

Looking at the long-term aims of the band, Dilworth said: "Until recently, our ambition was to record an album, and now we've done three. First and foremost, we want to get our feelings across to as many people as possible. We've done it in Japan and I hope it will escalate from there."

Herbs are currently dividing their time between finishing their next album and touring the Pacific — Fiji, Tonga and New Guinea — a particularly refreshing change for Tumahai after the grind of endless tours through the rock venues of Europe and America. When asked whether Herbs ever felt daunted by the seemingly hopeless struggle for a nuclear-free world against the implacable powers-that-be, Tumahai left me with a simple statement:

"The world has to look back at what it's done. People put these governments there, so it's *people* who can change it."

GRANT CALTON

TALL TALES & TRUE

Bars Need Guitars

"I'M really concerned that I've got a twelve-string guitar that's got psychedelic colours at the moment, because some people, I'm sure, are not objective enough to dissociate that from the music. That guitar's been like that since I first saw it in 1979, but now, all of a sudden, I wish I could change it because... just this horrible psychedelic thing that's going on."

Matthew de la Hunty sings and plays six and twelve-strings with Sydney's Tall Tales & True. After playing in a few nondescript bands in his hometown Perth, he made the trek eastward in search of the perfect collaborators. Finally, he came across Paul Miskin (bass) and Dave Rashleigh (drums). In their two-and-a-half years together they've kept a low profile, developing a noise with its own boundaries. As Matthew's quote (above) assures us, T T & T don't ally themselves with any scene or genre, and seeing the band live, comparisons are hard to find...

"I just don't hear things and go 'wow, I'd like to sound like that'. I'd say Tim Buckley (is an influence) because I just think Tim Buckley's fantastic, but I don't think we sound like him. He's got an absolutely identifiable sound, and no-one ever covers his songs 'cause no-one can replace it. To me that's a worthy thing to aspire to, rather than trying to make songs like Tim Buckley."

Sounds rather noble, doesn't it? Anyhow, this group's sound is undeniably fresh; Paul and Dave provide a sinuous, seductive undertow whether pumping out boogie or swaying in 3/4 time, while Matt's guitar seeks out the ultimate balance between chords and melody... and clarity and distortion. Sometimes, he finds them both.

There's no doubt that their songs can be classified as 'pop', but the trio are refreshingly indulgent with arrangements. The *Wasted Life* single is an example, a virtual maze of musical ideas leading to and from the core of the song. Repeated listenings make this an epic journey where you begin to see the signposts...

"When we started off," explains Paul, "I didn't know anything about songwriting. But the way that we do it now, it's all three of us."

"I'd been in Sydney for a year or so, and had ideas for songs, fairly concrete ideas. After a while, I found less and less need to worry about what they were doing," says Matthew. "Also, we just got more up to date with the material — they'd get hold of a song when I'd only just written it that week, rather than a song I'd been working on for six months."

"The way that they turn out these days, there's a set of chords and a rhythm — but everything that goes on between doesn't really matter," Paul counters.

"People talk about bands that have rapports, and it's a really great feeling when there's this unspoken understanding going on. It's just the whole reason you want to be in a band," Matthew concludes.

Wasted Life was recorded in May as part of the band's forthcoming self-titled mini album, scheduled for release in November. Working with Nick Mainsbridge, the band put the music down live — as a result, the record is bursting with energy, the strength of the rhythm section making movement to most of the seven tracks a compulsion. Though lacking focus in one or two spots, its release will confirm that Australia has produced another completely individual guitar band. In years to come, T T & T will no doubt become part of this tradition, already established by the Go-Betweens, the Triffids, the many faces of Ed Kuepper, the Birthday Party and the Moodists. MATTHEW: "The Moodists are pretty inspirational a) because Dave Graney's got a fantastic voice, and b) because they can play so completely off the wall, and it's just... mesmerising. I think we're a bit more concerned with the notes, but we try in some songs to get things pretty off the wall. That's the whole thing — bands either have to be moody and depressing, or else they have to be poppy and light and gay. It shouldn't be that way; you should... be able to take people into darker areas and (*he laughs*) lead them out again..."

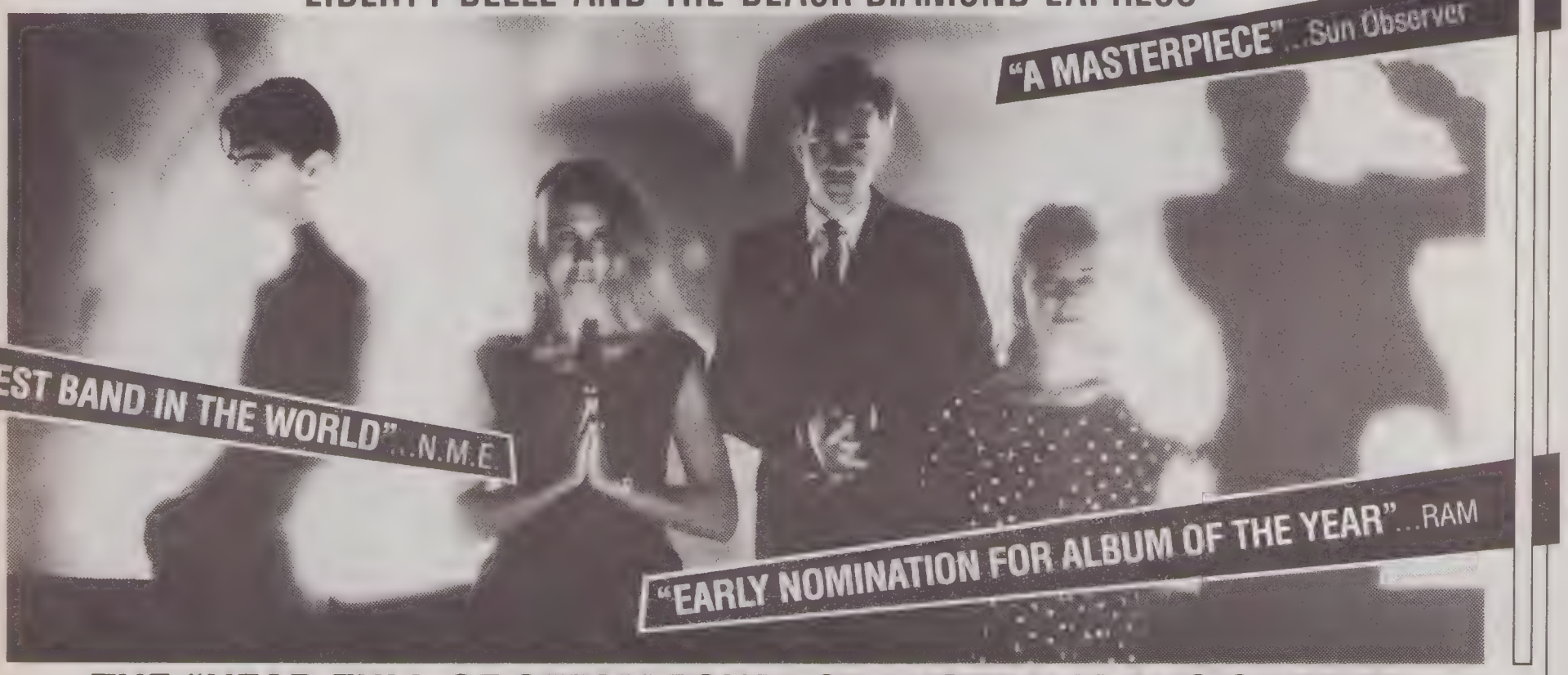
The band's mini album was recorded for Survival Records, whose representatives have just returned from the New Music Seminar in New York. It seems overseas independent distribution and college radio airplay is all but finalised. And still Matthew has the cheek to tell me:

"The whole thing that's worrying me is what we're going to do next!"

JOHN ENCARNACAO

THE GO-BETWEENS

LIBERTY BELLE AND THE BLACK DIAMOND EXPRESS



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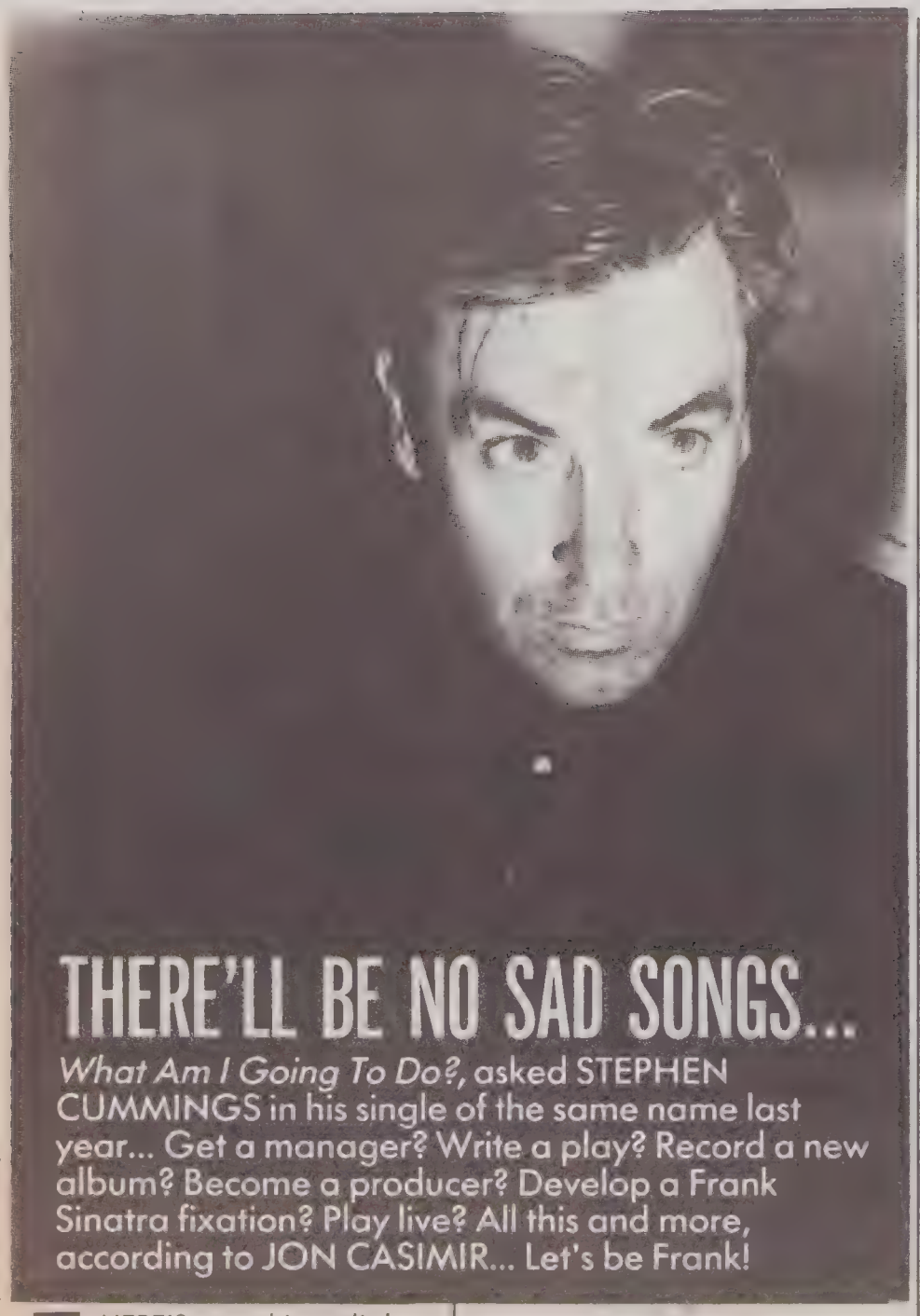

(Pic: Ian Greene)

THERE'LL BE NO SAD SONGS...

What Am I Going To Do?, asked STEPHEN CUMMINGS in his single of the same name last year... Get a manager? Write a play? Record a new album? Become a producer? Develop a Frank Sinatra fixation? Play live? All this and more, according to JON CASIMIR... Let's be Frank!

THERE'S something a little unnerving about a flood, whether it's two blocks from your house or two miles. You can't help but think that maybe that upstairs bedroom is not really high enough to guarantee protection for the stereo. At 11am on the Wednesday, our second day of enforced isolation, my housemate — whose bleary eyes matched the greyness of the weather — swallowed a lump of toast and eyed me off.

Stephen Cummings was in Melbourne, city of legendary bleakness and rain. He was ringing me in usually sunny Bathurst: an irony which was not lost on me.

Phone interviews are strange, distracting beasts. In the first place, it's difficult enough to talk to someone you've never met, but on the phone, another problematic dimension is added — you can't gauge reactions. Transcribed, the questions never seem to fit the answers and vice versa, but it had definitely all made sense at the time. You talk faster and listen slower; small things seem to cut you adrift, and concentration is transient.

Anyway, the floods had denied me a chance (since rectified) to hear Stephen's new album, *This Wonderful Life*, and put me in a strange mood for conducting an interview.

Stephen Cummings is doing alright. He's just released his second album, become a father, and been offered a couple of weeks performing in Boston — courtesy of the City Council of Melbourne, which just happens to be Boston's sister municipality. People tend to ring him up out of the blue with propositions like that. Just last year, he was involved with the Australian Dance Theatre in a project called *Detours*.

Since that time, he's been dabbling in other fields or writing — particularly television scripts. He's a busy man. Such is the burden of his tonsorial reputation.

TEN NOT SO SAD FACTS

FACT 1: Stephen Cummings has had a fairly low profile since the release of his first solo album, Senso, *in 1984.*

"It was a mixture of choice and circumstances," he laughs. It's a sort of dissolving laugh that eats the end of his sentences. "I did *Detours* about four months, and then I got a bit sick of everything. I've never had a manager, so I've had a very stop/start career. I take one step forward and then I get tired and drop back. It's half my own fault because I'm a lazy person..I sort of get interested and then wonder what I'm doing it for.

"I'd like to have a manager who I liked, who I thought was smart and interesting, but most of them are schleps and schmucks" *(this man reads [and writes] detective novels!).* "It would be great to have a thinking manager who could give you some good ideas, but frankly, have you met many exciting managers? I haven't."

FACT 2: He thinks a lot in his spare time.

"Mainly of what other careers I could be doing... but I don't seem to be coming up with many. Over the last year I've been working with a friend of mine on quite a few scripts. I've done a lot of work for not a lot of reward. One of the shows we wrote has actually got up to pilot stage — it's called *The Rock And Roll Detective*. It's got Melbourne playwright Barry Dickens acting in it. It mixes music and... it's sort of like *Get Smart* meets *Miami Vice*."

FACT 3: His new album is called This Wonderful Life.

"I wanted to do a whole album of real ballads and call it *Ten Sad Songs*, but I figured no-one would be very keen on putting it out. Anyway, the songs weren't panning out that way.

"I like *This Wonderful Life* as a title because it has two meanings. 'A wonderful life' — ironic, meaning it's not. At the same time, it *is* a wonderful life because at least I've been able to indulge myself and have two albums come out. In the state of the game, it's pretty good to be able to make these records because some of them haven't sold that well. *Senso* sold OK, but it didn't sell in Jimmy Barnes quantities."

FACT 4: It's very good. Not so much the first time around the turntable, but the third or fourth spin reveals its insidious charms. It echoes everyone from Marvin Gaye to Van Morrison to Joe Jackson to Sting, but Stephen's own redoubtable vocal talents lend it more credibility than it could possibly need. It's got soul!

"It's quite different to *Senso*, in the fact that it's more acoustic, and it's like a late-at-night mood album. Rather than being like a record with two singles and filler around them, it's much more a whole thing. It's got a unified sound and mood to it. It's sort of the down side — the black side of yuppiedom."

But will he fit into Sade's trousers?

FACT 5: He wrote his own press release for it.

"It's a complete album, a solid listen, yet each song tells its own story, a yearning, a burning, like Carl Gustav Jung letting it all hang out, baby, at the Copacabana, like the Darker Side of Barry Manilow — the sort of album that you could advertise in *Australian Singles Magazine*... like it swings, but sometimes it's lonely on that dance floor.

"But how many tears will have to fall, how many hearts be broken, how many half-empty glasses in half-empty nightclubs be stared into by half-full people before we cry out in this polar night: 'We aren't going to take it anymore'."

FACT 6: He did it all himself (almost).

"I produced the record myself in a small studio in Melbourne and I did it in 12 days — recorded and mixed. It's the first record I've ever done where I've followed it through right from the start — writing the songs at home, organising it all, doing them, right up to actually going and cutting the record.

"The people on it are all friends from around Melbourne. I co-wrote all the songs. I wrote a few with Andrew Pendlebury (*ex-Sports, now with the Slaughtermen*). I wrote three songs with Dean Richards (*ex-Whirlywirld, Equal Local, Hot Half Hour*), and a couple with Ian Stephens (*Slaughtermen vocalist*), who I've written with before.

"It was easy because everyone wanted to do it for the sake of it. I wanted to make this record for its own sake, rather than for a contractual reason. There was nothing at the time I wanted to do more than make this record."

FACT 7: He's given up making records just to please other people. He now makes them for himself.

"I like people to buy my records, but I make them to please myself. Only one single came out last year, *What Am I Gonna Do?* I was a bit frustrated with that record. I'd got people together who I thought would make a really good pop record, but it didn't get any more airplay than my singles normally get. So I thought, it's so random whether or not a record is successful that I might as well just be indulgent.

"The whole thing of getting a hit record has no logic to it. A good example of that is Paul Kelly. His latest single is getting played in Melbourne, and I don't think it's any better or worse than other records he's put out. Who can say why suddenly he gets played? There's nothing like a dose of good luck in this industry."

FACT 8: He's really enjoying playing live at the moment.

"I do a fair bit more 'up' stuff — a mixture of things from *Senso*, a few other songs that I just like singing, and about eight songs off the new album. I've got a really good band, including this great guitarist, Michael Denelzan. He's touring live with Tim Finn and getting a band together with Phil Judd. I've also got half of the Black Sorrows. It's a really good band and a very upbeat set, even though there's a lot of ballads."

FACT 9: It's hard to be a solo performer in this country.

"I really like the idea of longevity and doing things for the sake of doing them. Some are going to be successful and some aren't. You can't always be right.

"In Australia it's very much the case that you do one record and if that doesn't work, well, that's it. Look at someone like Peter Gabriel. His latest album has been very successful, but he's had about five albums since his last success. I like the idea of being able to do good things, fuck up a bit, and then come back with more good things."

FACT 10: The floods went down and Stephen's still doing alright....

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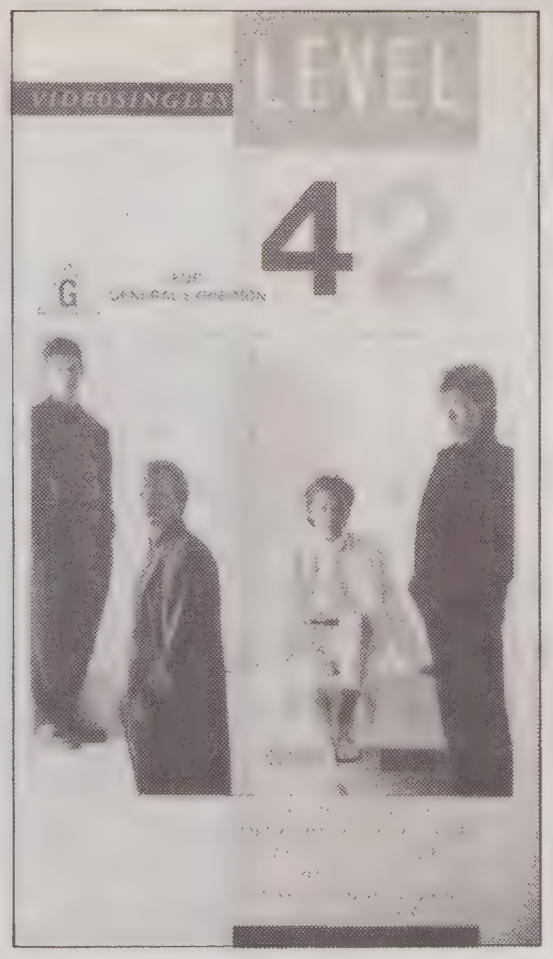

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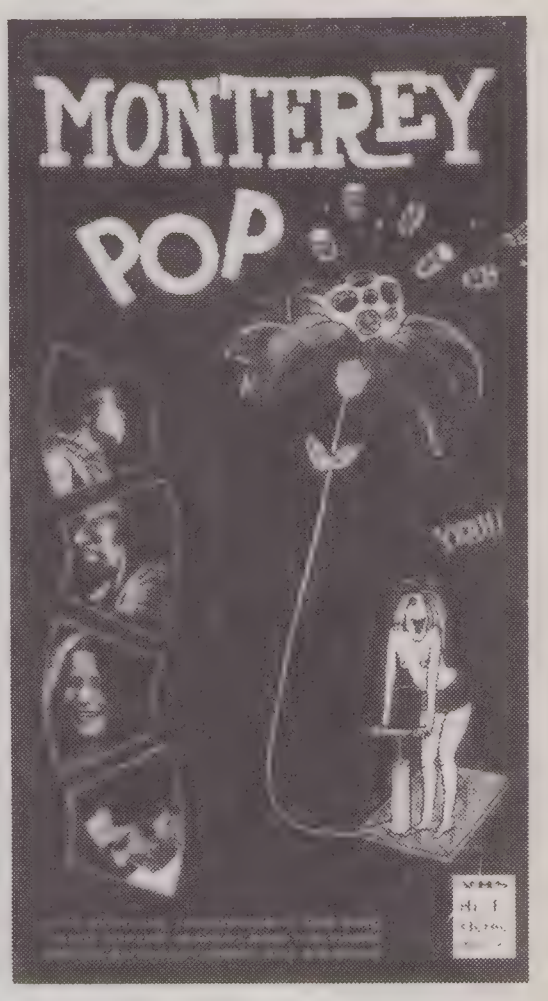

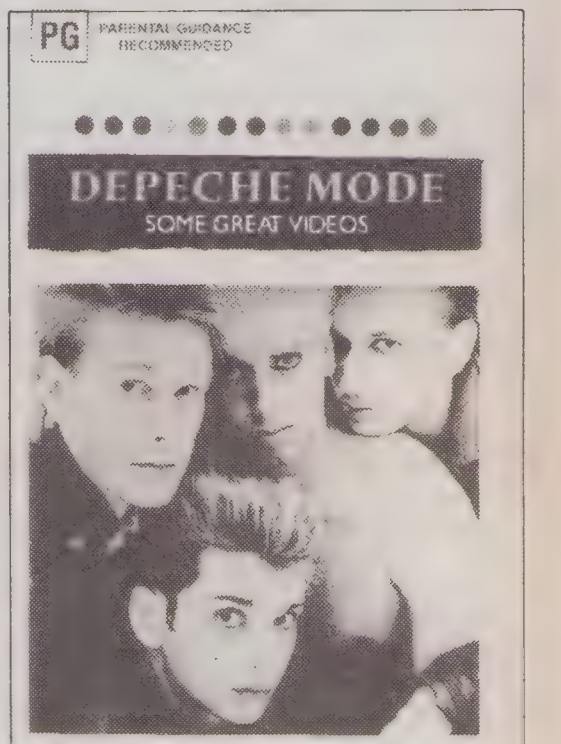

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SUCCESS MINUS EXCESS?

As the GO-BETWEENS return to Australia to another heroes' welcome, MARK CAREY quizzes ROBERT FORSTER on his growing reputation as a "Sex-God" in Europe. And of course there's the serious stuff as well...

Sex-God Bob (Pic: Francine McDougall)

THE Go-Betweens' last Australian tour signalled the coming of *Liberty Belle And The Black Diamond Express*, and so confirmed their metamorphosis from *Cattle And Cane* innocence and uncertain introspection to the all-new model characterised by "glamour and a new form of showbusiness", as Robert Forster puts it.

Sure, *Spring Hill Fair* was a step in the sophisticated direction with its fresh and more elaborate arrangements, but it wasn't till this year that the new image really made its mark — signified by the debut of Robert's fabled 'red frock' onstage at the Tivoli in Sydney. And nobody could have tipped *that*...

"Nor did I, but it just felt exactly right. Actually I haven't worn the frock anywhere else but Australia, and I couldn't imagine doing so. I perhaps don't even understand it now, why I felt the impulse, but I did."

Like the model of the classic entertainer, Forster takes his role of calculated outrageousness perfectly seriously, and his earnest tone of voice betrays not a hint of sarcasm. Like when the subject of a recent German review comes up, one which describes Forster as the "sex symbol" of the Go-Betweens. How does one respond to such a suggestion?

"With total enthusiasm of course. There is some talk over here (England) in the last couple of months that I've become a sex-god. I try and stay out of this debate, but again it's all about the way I move on stage at the moment — which is all natural impulse, and basic urges just come out."

And what about the other members of the Go-Betweens — are they following this course?

This time he laughs. "No, they're concentrating on the music and enjoying the music. Being a five-piece, having Amanda Brown (violin) on stage has made a difference, because it's almost got to the stage of safety in numbers. I'm just one fifth of the band and I think they're all fantastic performers, and this is just the way I want to contribute my fifth. I like dancing and I like moving."

A star is born. I refer Robert to those wonderful lines from *Twin Layers Of Lightning* — *'We went into a club/ bouncer's got no brains/ he said both of you are barred/ I had to set him straight/ Listen Jack, don't you know I'm A Star?'*

"It's quite funny, but that lyric turned out to be somewhat prophetic. I was at a Beggars' Banquet party at a club here called the Limelight Club, which is sort of the hip place in town at the moment, and I got thrown out of my own party! I got caught in the... well, anyway, I felt exactly the same thing.

"These bouncers just escorted me out of the club and I was tossed onto the pavement. You sort of brush the dust off your sleeves and go 'That's no way to treat me.'"

Didn't you point out to them that you were a star?

"I didn't really have a chance, but as I was approaching the front door there was a huge crowd of people trying to get in. It cost seven pounds, and they're all waving it over their heads like it's a lottery or a bingo game. I just stood there and bellowed at the top of my voice, 'It's not worth it, don't come in. Go away.' That infuriated them even more, and I got pushed down the stairs."

Robert is a little circumspect about the reason for his ejection ("it's slightly embarrassing"), but relents. "Let's just say I was caught in the toilet with a member of the opposite sex." 'Nuff said...

You'll be pleased to learn the life of your working pop star isn't all gallivanting through London's nightspots. Recent movements include a European tour, and I wondered if it must be weird playing to people who often can't understand what you're saying...

"Generally they do. Especially the young people in Germany and Scandinavia, where English is very much a second language. This tour we played in Italy for the second time, where it's more or less Italian (spoken) everywhere, and that can be a bit frustrating when you're singing in a club and you realise that probably the only people who understand what you're saying are the people on stage. But it's okay, it doesn't particularly bother me."

First job back in England was the Glastonbury weekend, an annual extravaganza gathering hundreds of musicians beneath the banner of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Apparently nuclear consciousness runs higher than ever in frontline Britain... Chernobyl being the obvious rallying point this year.

"The nuclear issue is one of the few issues that are clear-cut," says Forster. "That's why I don't mind being involved in it. A lot of other political issues are very much blurred, and you can get caught up in a lot of in-fighting and tokenism. But the nuclear debate is so clearly defined. The whole thing is quite close."

After a short break for rehearsal and some writing, it's home to Australia — undoubtedly to another heroes' welcome. Then comes the hard part — the conquest of America. Whether they can capitalise on the growing wave of pleasantly-crafted guitar pop in the States is up for grabs, but the Go-Betweens are coming ready or not.

"We're spending four to six weeks on the classic American tour — the van and all. It's something I've wanted to do once. After six weeks in America I'll probably want to shoot myself and never go back there again, but at the moment I'm gullible enough to want to do it. And the album has just come out there.

"I don't know how it's going to go there. It's strange, because there was a time when we'd put out a record and would know how it had done after about a month. Now our records are coming out on good labels around the world, and the life of one of our records seems to be about six to eight months — which I really like."

AS the Go-Betweens grow, so does their sound with an increasingly lush, sweeping grandeur — as opposed to the raw tension of their earlier work. But is there a danger of overdoing it (a la Mike Scott and the Waterboys) whereby the overstatedness of the arrangements might crush the intimacy of the emotions?

"Obviously I don't think so. The Waterboys is a very good example actually of a band I can hear beneath so many of their layers that might actually have a good idea or two. Unfortunately it's spoilt by that man's love of excess and a certain amount of sham, and I think we can see how ridiculous it can get very quickly.

"Basically it's a misguided belief in wrong areas of rock 'n' roll that leads to that kind of thing — people standing on top of P.A. stacks making gestures to 10,000 people. It can get a bit stupid. I think we have enough sensitivity and intelligence to avoid those traps."

Bigger isn't necessarily better; so can the Go-Betweens find success without excess?

"Ultimately I want our reputation to lie with our music — the albums that we make, I'll take those to the grave and be quite happy. We need to cross new barriers, meet new people, do new things each time we return to a place, and success is a very convenient bringer of new ideas and new situations. I think we've got something to say that should be heard, and quite frankly I'm interested in success."

But considering the high standards and international recognition the Go-Betweens have achieved, success back home remains only moderate. None of their singles has reached the major charts, even though Robert admits "Australia would be the first place I'd want a Top 40 record if I had a choice."

What is the barrier then? It's certainly not the quality of the music or for want of trying...

"That's the frustrating thing, because I can't see it. I think originally we weren't seen as a full-tilt rock 'n' roll boogie experience at a time when that was a lot more accepted than it is now. So perhaps we've had to do a fair amount of fighting against some misconceptions about us. We've grown and moved, and perhaps some people haven't realised that. But the barrier to success at home is almost invisible to me. It's hard to name the enemy."

As they return home to decent local record company backing for the first time (the main reason they're able to return at all is through the support of TrueTone and PolyGram), the Go-Betweens have never been in a better position to break through.

All time allows for is to reassure Robert that Sydney has not been turned into a great aquarium by recent flooding. "You don't get much news of Australia here, but there's been photos and stuff of Bob Hawke in a helicopter, flying over Sydney."

The waters are subsiding, I assure him.

"Oh good, I just had visions of my friends in dingies, just pushing them out of windows in Surry Hills and floating down to the Harbour."

JOHN CALE

TOURING 1986

WED 10	EASTS LEAGUES CLUB, BRISBANE
THUR 11	TBA
FRI 12	CENTRAL CLUB HOTEL, RICHMOND
SAT 13	CENTRAL CLUB HOTEL, RICHMOND
SUN 14	THE UNIVERSAL THEATRE, MELBOURNE
TUE 16	OLD CANBERRA INN, CANBERRA
WED 17	OLD MELBOURNE HOTEL, PERTH
THUR 18	LE ROX, ADELAIDE
FRI 19	SYDNEY TRADE UNION CLUB
SAT 20	SYDNEY TRADE UNION CLUB
SUN 21	SYDNEY TRADE UNION CLUB (FINAL SHOW)

ALBUM "ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE" OUT NOW ON BEGGARS BANQUET!

LOVE, DEATH & RESURRECTION

Forever on the fringes till now, PAUL KELLY has at last achieved mainstream recognition of his redoubtable songwriting talent with the chart breakthrough of *Before Too Long*... CLINTON WALKER wonders why it *took* so long, while the COLOURED GIRLS go *'Do do-do do-do...'*, and do it better than any band Kelly's ever had in the past... Listen to the upcoming *Gossip* double set for absolute proof, and join us in the Victorian snowfields for this in-depth interview. (PIC by FRANCINE McDOUGALL)

WE ARE buried deep in the Victorian snowfields. Not exactly snowed in or anything, but this is an isolation nobody could have expected: the Kooroora Lodge at Mount Buller, a couple of wings of rooms connected to a communal centre, which consists of a dining room and a couple of bars and nothing else. Like, really *nothing*. Not a TV in the place, no phones, not even so much as a pool table.

Visions we all shared — of reclining in front of an open fire, brandy in hand, gazing out a picture window over the slopes — are most definitely not realised.

Paul Kelly and the Coloured Girls have come here to play a couple of nights — not as part of the national tour just about to get underway to coincide with the release of the band's new double album, *Gossip*, but maybe something like a warm-up for it.

The punters here haven't come for rock'n'roll. I guess that's largely the logic of the Kooroora's setup. There *is* nothing to do here except ski, then come in and get pissed before hitting the hay, having tried to avoid doing it alone. So when the Coloured Girls take the stage tonight, it's pretty apparent their presence is merely an interruption to the domination of the disco, the soundtrack for the mating game.

Some of these kids, though, may have recognised the Black Irishman up there wearing blue-denim work threads and a black Washburn. Wasn't he the guy who had that song *Billy Baxter* out a few years back? Yeah, it was kinda catchy... whatever happened to him?

Well, he got swamped. I don't want to have to admit it either, but Paul Kelly was a victim. That was his image in the beginning and eventually it became the

[illegible]de-eyed and innocent when he [illegible] Melbourne from his hometown [illegible] in 1977, Paul was almost [illegible] hailed as some sort of latter-[illegible]an, the suffering, streetwise [illegible]writer. Ridiculous though that [illegible]seen, the pressure was great, [illegible]ns high — and Paul, an [illegible] and sensitive man at the best [illegible]times, was unable, understandably, to [illegible]to it.

The old 'too much, too soon' story again: [illegible]perhaps a moot point whether or not [illegible]d fail to deliver on his promise, even [illegible]own terms; but certainly his talent [illegible]o slow — on *Their* terms — to [illegible]p. The industry ate him up and spat [illegible]out. The final indignity came when, [illegible]having just completed his second [illegible]for Mushroom Records, *Manila* [illegible]would stiff unceremoniously [illegible]Paul was badly bashed one night [illegible]g in Melbourne and had to have [illegible]ow wired up for months. Life wasn't [illegible]going too well on the home front either. [illegible]e was out in the freezeing cold.

But as Dylan himself once said: *'When you got nothing, you got nothing to lose'*... Paul moved to Sydney — about two [illegible]ago now — and started to pick up the pieces. He began appearing around [illegible]town as a solo act, which led eventually to [illegible]— an album that won, if not great [illegible], then at least accolades. If Paul Kelly [illegible]making a comeback, this time he was [illegible]arriving. Then he got the Coloured [illegible]together, and the rise has since [illegible]steadily continued.

Everyone agrees that this is the best [illegible]Paul's ever had, but it's perhaps the [illegible]Coloured Girls' strength that it's not yet [illegible]another case of a singer/songwriter-plus-backing-band. It's one complete, tight unit.

With a classic approach and a classic lineup — two guitars (including Paul's), keyboards, bass and drums, and all these boys do sing — the Coloured Girls colour Paul Kelly's songs *just right*, summoning up the sweeping grandeur of the classic band that gave birth to them all: *the* Band. And that's no mean feat.

If any of the punters here tonight had paid any attention, they would have witnessed the Coloured Girls cooking like hell — which is what they do with alarming frequency. But this is the sort of audience that needs *Countdown* to tell them they like something — and as *Countdown* has managed to find an excuse to avoid the Coloured Girls, 'banning' their current video *Before Too Long* for its images of transvestism, violence, crime and cigarette smoking (standard television fare I would have thought), these punters don't know where to begin. *Before Too Long* is climbing the charts nonetheless, and if we went back to Mount Buller now, maybe the Coloured Girls would even have stolen some of the disco's thunder. But the Coloured Girls are troupers to the tips of their RM's, and so they press on regardless.

The next day, while the rest of the band are either asleep or out skiing, Paul and I find the quietest spot we can in this bustling barrelhouse to talk. I ask him, will *Gossip* be the salvo to finally break his commercial hoodoo?

"Yeah, but I've been thinking about that too," he replies. "If the record was a big success, that could be a nightmare as well." He laughs. "If it was a commercial failure, I would be pretty frustrated by that, because, you know, I think this is the first pop record I've made. There's enough pop songs on it for me to be disappointed if it didn't sell more than 3,000 copies, like all my other records. But if it went over the top, I dunno... That's just frightening too!"

'I'VE ALWAYS wanted to write, I guess... I've always wanted to write pop songs. And there's this misconception of me as this battling, heart-on-his-sleeve songwriter who is sort of hanging out all his dirty washing in his songs. But really all I'm trying to do, the main thing I'm trying to do is write songs.

"I'm trying to write songs before I'm trying to write confessions, or... I mean, I don't particularly want to tell the world all about myself. But you do tend to grab at whatever's at hand. The material for the songs, a lot of the time it is my facts, so it might just be something that happened to you, and you just take it a bit further.

"Wordworth's definition of poetry is 'Emotion recollected in tranquility'. I don't know if that would be my definition, but the important thing is the word 'recollected'. And probably the whole desire to write — well, the thing to me is, I hate forgetting things. I hate waking up in the morning and not remembering the night before. It's always appalled me how much you can forget, about your childhood, or when you just think back — say you lived with someone for a year or something, and then you try to remember, 'what did we do?'

"But you know, I get people coming up to me and saying, 'What was that song about? What was the experience that gave rise to that?', as if all my songs are about something that's happened to me. I mean, nobody ever asks Dragon that, do they?

"Like when I wrote *Incident On South Dowling Street* (a song on *Post* about a lover's drug death): "that was a case of a song writing itself. I looked at it and thought, 'Oh my God! This is sick! A sick song! How can I sing this?' But now, it's one of the ones... It's fun to play! And I don't feel that thing anymore, because it's gone out there, it's a song, and in a sense it's got nothing to do with me anymore."

So songwriting to Paul Kelly isn't a purging process, like some form of therapy?

"No, I reject that notion — to me that's like adolescent poetry. I'm hammering home the point, but the thing is, I don't care if I don't leave any trace of myself behind; I just want to leave the songs. Like Robert Johnson — nobody knew hardly anything about him, he was an elusive figure, but he left all these great songs behind. Life just goes by, and then one day you're not going to be here anymore, and I just want to... I just want to make something to show for it..."

Paul protests — "We're not talking about the band enough" — but I tell him to leave that up to me. That's one of the reasons I'm here, after all, to get to know them better. And what better way to get to know them, as the eleven of us in the touring party share eight bunks in two tiny rooms...?

The Coloured Girls would be a decent enough bunch of blokes if only they weren't bloody mad keen Essendon supporters. Football, VFL football, looms large in the Coloured Girls' scheme of things. (One song on the new album, *Leaps & Bounds*, even alludes to it.) So all the way up to Buller in the bus on Saturday afternoon, having resigned ourselves to not being able to catch a game in Melbourne before we left, we had to listen to the radio broadcast of the Essendon/Hawthorn clash. My sympathies, as an old Melbourne native myself now transplanted in Sydney, are naturally with the Swans — for which I cop constant flak. Worse, the Swans lost to Carlton that day; worse still, Essendon won!

It is, in fact, a fair guarantee that if the Coloured Girls play after an Essendon loss, they too will play poorly; but today they're elated, and indeed, that night they put in a fine performance.

Just as they are as a musical entity, off-stage the Coloured Girls are a well-balanced, finely co-ordinated collection of individuals. Keyboardist Peter 'Pedro' Bull, who's recently taken on the task of TM-ing (to the uninitiated, that makes him tour manager), might disagree, as he's trying to motivate ever-reluctant guitarist Steve Connelly to move on anything, or else pin down for more than a minute hyperactive drummer Michael Barclay and his comic cohort and rhythm section other-half, Jon Schofield; but it's a fact that these contrasts carry over onto the stage and conspire to create the seamless mesh that is the Coloured Girls.

"There are strong personalities in this band, that project on stage," says Paul — who, it's fair to say, is the band's steadying influence, the focus that pulls all the elements into alignment. It was surely one of the blights on the early stages of Paul's career that he never seemed to be able to consolidate a lineup for his band. Throughout the two albums he made with differing incarnations of the Dots — *Talk* (1980) and *Manila* ('82) — his material was barely ever done justice. Paul puts the mistakes he made, if he has to put it that way, down to inexperience.

"I just sort of muddled my way through," he says. "It was all accidental. Looking back, I can see why. It was to do with learning how to write songs, which has taken me a while, and also, almost being a commercial success early on, and then almost destroying myself.

"I lost control. But things had actually started to change before I left Melbourne. I moved shortly after that. And that change was just in taking more charge of my life."

With *Post*, unencumbered by unsympathetic accompaniment, the simple elegance and gentle effectiveness of Paul's songs were allowed to emerge intact. It was a record that exuded an illuminating glow...

Post also served to dispel the damaging associations Paul had long suffered with drugs.

"I was pegged," he admits, "because... I've never been addicted to drugs, but there's been stages in my life when I've wasted a lot of time using them. But one of the cruxes of *Post*, and you can read it like this, was that the character was someone who'd gotten over some sort of drug addiction."

By the time *Post* came out last year (on a one-off deal with Mushroom again), Paul was already appearing live with Michael Barclay and Steve Connelly. The pair had contributed parts to *Post*, having arrived in Sydney from Melbourne, where Barclay had done stints with Little Murders and the Runners, and Connelly, the Cuban Heels and the nascent Zimmermen (he played on *Don't Go To Sydney!*). Pedro Bull, who'd been in the Amazing Woolloomoolosers, had also helped out on *Post*. Thus were the Coloured Girls conceived.

As Paul says, by way of explaining the band's name: "Michael and Steve and I were singing as a trio. They did harmonies, and it just started as a joke; on *Walk On The Wild Side*, how it goes, *'And the coloured girls go do, do-do...'*"

Recruiting bassist Michael Armiger, not to mention manager Stuart Coupe, the Coloured Girls began gigging as a full-blown band — occasionally augmented by additional musicians like horn players Chris Coyne and Dianne Spence. Armiger was subsequently replaced by Jon Schofield, formerly of Grooveyard, and it was obvious then that Paul had found the last link in his best band ever.

"Oh yeah, it's by far the best," he can now enthuse; "it's the most flexible and the most versatile, and everyone just plays the songs. You know, when I first started playing in bands, I didn't know what I was doing, I didn't know how to direct people; and it's not that I direct the band as such now, it's more like they just seem to know intuitively what to do."

Paul had told me once before that he didn't believe real originality was possible in this day and age, that "what's new is not something that springs forth from nowhere — the only thing that's new is new *combinations*." I ask him if he maintains this belief...

"I'm a bit uncomfortable with it now. That's why I'm so taken by bands like the Triffids and the Go-Betweens, because they seem to have a *sound*; you know, you hear them and it's instantly recognisable. Now maybe we've got that too, but I can't see it."

If that is so, it's because the Coloured Girls operate strictly within a genre. To say that, though, implies (self-)imposed limitations, and that's not quite the case. What the Coloured Girls are, in essence, is a pub band, purveyors of pub rock. That's a genre that's incredibly broad-based, encompassing all sorts of strains. Like, say, Elvis Costello and the Attractions — an example of extended pub rock at its best — the Coloured Girls treat a song with a feel that's best suited to it; they successfully draw on country, blues, rock'n'soul, funk, folk, reggae, rock'n'roll and pop, even romantic balladry. Their versatility is afforded by accomplished technique underlined with an empathy for those roots.

"I have a vague idea as to where this band's heading — it's a very eclectic band," says Paul. "We would have a broader range, and our live shows bear that out. Sometimes they work, sometimes they don't because we do tend to ramble. We don't do all the quiet songs in the middle of the set, I've always gone a bit against the idea of tailoring a show to build up to some sort of climax — that's why we never work with set lists. Because I like to just pull things out of the air: that's the way we keep things fresh."

Paul unashamedly admits to his sources, and it's classical influences from Hank Williams, Robert Johnson, Jimmie Rodgers, Woody Guthrie, Buddy Holly and Elvis to Dylan, Lou Reed and the Beatles that have inbued him with the agility of a real songsmith. And the beauty of it is, he has a seemingly constant facility to turn out tunes both instantly familiar and memorable.

"Yeah, I wanna write songs that sound like they've been there all along. Like, you think, 'I *know* this song.' Dylan said quite a few times, the songs are in the air, and you just grab them and put them down. I take it as a compliment when someone says to me... Someone asked me if *Before Too Long* was an old 60s song, and I said, 'Oh no.' There's a fine line between classicism and derivativeness.

"Sometimes I'll write a song, and I'll realise it's too much like something else, so I'll just change it a bit. Woody Guthrie said that — writing songs is just changing a few notes here and there, and you've got a whole new song."

The Coloured Girls scoop up the songs that spill from Paul's pen and push them out onto a plane that wouldn't presume to try and upstage them, or their inherent appeal: only enhance it.

"I think we've started to map out a ground that's our own. In this country, obviously, you've got to work as a dance band. We play in places where people come to drink and dance, and we do that, and we can also pull it back to just an acoustic guitar — and people seem to like that too."

Indeed, the Coloured Girls can stir up a little storm in a beerglass, as it were, in a pub. And as they've toured Australia tirelessly over the last year or so, even if at the Kooroora Lodge they didn't make a great dent on those frost-bitten brains, they've built up a solid, sometimes even occasionally fanatical following.

One of Paul's biggest-ever fans is Mushroom Records exec Michelle Higgins. So during the recording of *Gossip* — which the Coloured Girls went into off their own bat — record companies began bidding for the band, and Regular looked like winning them. Michelle holed up in the Sebel Townhouse in Sydney and refused to budge until she'd lured them away. Ten days, and a bill for that period at the five-star Sebel later, she was successful. Although Paul may be Back in the Big Man's Beard, as they say, he's made a record the way he wanted — and it was going to come out that way.

'IF YOU were trying to pick a chronological development in my songwriting," Paul says as he polishes off another VB, "it would be false. People have asked me if on *Gossip* I've changed my direction — but I haven't, because I've written all sorts of songs from the very beginning."

In many ways, *Gossip* is something of a clearing-house. Some songs on it date back almost a decade. As a double-album (which trivialists love to point out, makes it probably Australia's second-ever studio double-album, after Spectrum's *Milesago* [1972], just beating Nick Cave's new one to the punch), *Gossip* is a bold step and a mammoth undertaking.

Like *Exile On Main Street* and *London Calling*, and unlike *Blonde On Blonde*, *Gossip* is a vast collection of songs which traverse diverse stylistic territory yet hang together through an unremitting determination. Call it a thrust.

After playing all the songs live for some time, the Coloured Girls went into Trafalgar Studios confident with the way they'd honed the material and confident, too, about putting the responsibility of production in the hands of Alan Thorne. Why him?

"*Next To Nothing*," came Paul's quick reply, referring to Died Pretty's magisterial EP of last year which Thorne engineered. "Alan, I knew, could get the sounds, the clean, natural sounds, and that's all we wanted.

"The fact that we were doing a double-album was good too, because it was more relaxing than a single album, because there's just so many songs to work on. There's a few rough edges, but so what? If you get too meticulous, you lose the plot."

Certainly Alan Thorne has succeeded in capturing the Coloured Girls at their cracking best, bolstered by some fine performances from guests. Despite its stylistic divergences — from, to name some highlights, the trademark pop-rock balladry of *Before Too Long* and *Leaps & Bounds*, the funky feel of *Tighten Up*, the outright raunch of *Darling It Hurts*, the haunting politico-folk of *Maralinga*, to the souped-up reworkings of songs off *Post* (*Incident On Sth Dowling Street*, *Look So Fine*, *Feel So Low*) and pure ballads like *Stories Of Me*, *Randwick Bells* and the lush title-track itself — *Gossip* presents a common thread of several themes which interweave through the songs to ultimately create a coherent cycle. Where *Post* was a record largely set in a specific time and place, *Gossip* ventures as well into the abstract.

"I worked out a way to describe the two types of songs I would write," Paul says. "Like, the songs on *Gossip* — it's the difference between Chuck Berry and Buddy Holly. Chuck Berry was a big influence on *Post*, that was all place-names and details. Buddy Holly doesn't do that. He's the complete opposite. If you read Buddy Holly on the printed page, it's almost bland, it's all *'love'*, *'true'*, *'please'*, *'me'* — like the early Beatles, and I'd put songs like *Before Too Long* in that kind of bag."

Another thing Paul told me once was that as Yeats said, the only things an intelligent person should be concerned with are sex and death. And sex — as either a symptom of love or not, or something in between — and death inhabit these songs; and then, completing the cycle, so too does birth, procreation, or at least (Paul being the father of seven-year old son Declan) the responsibilities of parenthood. Everything that's implied in the title *Gossip* itself, as well...

"I liked *Gossip* as a title because it's all-embracing. Because gossip encompasses... well, the grist of gossip is life-and-death things; you know, someone got married, someone broke up... all those everyday things. Gossip takes it all in, everyone does it and everyone's a victim of it. It's the nuts-and-bolts of living, really...

... Spread out over four sides of long-playing vinyl in what is as impressive a debut album (which it is, for the Coloured Girls) as any released here so far this year. So is there a place in the pop world for a not-so young, not-very pretty group who play, in a straightforward yet insidiously intoxicating fashion, great songs?

"I think there is," says Paul. "But because of the varied nature of the songs, we're hard to categorise. And I've been categorised before as this bleeding-heart sort of songwriter, but people are surprised when they see the band now, because it's a different thing — it's a rock'n'roll show. It just takes a bit longer with us."

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TEA 0801

THE HOUSEMARTINS

Like Frogs Out Of Hull

THE Housemartins are a mass of contradictions. They are a sunny, straightforward pop band without frills or fancy footwork, yet their lyrics are deep, broody and (very definitely) ideologically sound. They put out snappy, commercial pop singles and then worry themselves sick about the consequences of stardom.

They are Christians, but they drink and swear and like to boogie. They want to be subversive, but they cultivate the impression of simple boys interested in football, girls and a four-bar beat. They wear terrible sweaters and look awkward on stage, but they are a brilliant live band. They are ugly bastards, but they are also pop stars.

Their music hardly plunders the boundaries of invention, but their pure pop influences — the Beatles, Madness and Squeeze spring readily to mind — are astutely chosen, and the occasional quirkiness they bond into it, whether through lyrics or gospel inflections, helps to set them completely apart from all the other young guns.

Now that *Happy Hour* has taken off, there seems no limit to their potential. The first two singles, *Flag Day* and *Sheep* were both minor UK hits, but on their debut album, *London O Hull 4*, it's conceivable to imagine every track as a possible single. And the fact that precious few UK bands of any note or worth have broken through during the last year makes the arrival of The Housemartins even more valuable.

Confused by success they may well now be, but their rise thus far has been sharply defined and clear-sighted... their slogans —"the Housemartins are quite good", and "The fourth-best band in Hull" — became more famous than they were, and it seems wholly appropriate they should now be signed to an independent label (Go! Discs) which was last week having its phone answered with the words: "Good morning, Go! Discs, tell us how we can take some money off you..."

And so they sit around a rather barren dressing room in Hampstead, squabbling among themselves, indulging in makeshift games of football on the patio, worrying whether it's ideologically unsound for them to be pop stars. Stan whiles away the time shaving desultorily. Norman breaks off at regular intervals to apply a stick of deodorant to his armpit.

PAUL: "I think we've lost our way a little bit. Over the last few weeks, we had our first bust-up. I've personally certainly lost my way... we're not crystal clear what we want to do any more."

NORMAN: "To bring in an analogy, until now there was one carrot and we all knew what we were going for. Now there's all these other carrots, bigger, fatter carrots, and we don't know which one we're going for any more."

STAN: "It's like now we've been elected, now we're in government and we're having all these squabbles."

PAUL: "We were tadpoles, and now we're frogs looking for a bigger pond."

Dear God, kings of analogy already!

NORMAN: "Did you know that Ringo developed a nervous twitch because of all the pressures? He had to wear dark glasses to hide it. Not that I'm trying to say we're bigger or better than the Beatles of course..."

STAN: "George Michael has developed this shiver so he can't use a razor. Poor bloke... he has to walk around with days and days of stubble on him."

Collective musical likes, and therefore influences, include Al Green, Elvis Costello, the Beatles, Bill Bragg, Stevie Wonder, the Redskins, the Smiths, Style Council, and — bless Paul Heaton's heart — the Fall. Which makes you curious how they can possibly entertain the idea of shrouding subversive lyrics in a pure pop structure.

There's a body of thought in the band that their follow-up to *Happy Hour* should be something completely off the wall and profoundly uncommercial, both as a statement of dissent to ease their consciences about becoming pop stars and to put a deliberate brake on their soaraway success. Well, they may be with a wild and wacky independent label but I doubt if they'll be allowed to get away with *that* — even if they seriously try to pursue it. They'll have to be content in pursuing their protest at the system through lyrics that infiltrate and double-cross. Consider, after all, that *Flag Day* asks hard questions about the morality of charity; that *Get Up Off Our Knees* is a furious indictment of the class structure and a bitter condemnation of the monarchy; that *Sheep* attacks society's most regular conventions of orthodoxy; and *We're Not Deep* tackles unemployment.

NORMAN: "There are so many alternative bands saying something, but if you look at straight pop, very few of them are saying anything. It's all love songs... I know lots of people who are ideologically sound and everything, but they're *pop* fans... they just enjoy hearing pop music on the radio. They're not serious music fans but they buy them because they like the music, but lyrics mean nothing. A band like that who actually say something can get through to a lot more people."

Is *Happy Hour* a message song?

PAUL: "Yeah. All our songs are. It's a mixture of two things — it's anti-sexist, but the actual story is based in an office. That office type of sexism... that whole mentality of a happy hour and all the trappings that go with it, and the continuous happy hour and the people who go for that sort of lifestyle."

NORMAN: "We had a letter from somebody the other day who said they'd been converted after seeing us. They listened to what Paul said on stage and had gone into the lyrics a bit more and had been converted from a confused liberal to a socialist. Even if that happens on a limited basis it's better than nothing.

"It's better than people like Sigue Sigue Sputnik having an influence over young children and them growing up thinking that making racist jokes is funny and that capitalism's a wonderful thing."

Speaking of capitalism, the inclusion on the LP of *Get Up Off Our Knees* affirms their attitude to the monarchy.

"It's lovely to see young people in love, isn't it?" coos Stan. "The working class of this country need a wedding, don't they? We don't lose a prince, we gain a princess... no, actually, I can't find the words to express what I think should happen to the royal family."

PAUL: "In conservative terms it's very unfortunate, but we can no longer afford the Royals."

STAN: "We're hoping for voluntary redundancy and natural wastage to get rid of them."

NORMAN: "Basically we haven't got the beds for them. That's why they're getting married so they can share beds."

STAN: "In America, God bless it, America's only got one president and one woman. Can we afford to keep an entire menagerie? I suggest we should burn the Queen Mother and... you know like the Beatles used to chop their bedclothes into inch squares, we should chop the Royal Family into small bits and sell them to Japanese tourists..."

Vicious boys. Can we ever trust a fresh-faced pop song again?

COLIN IRWIN

The Screaming Blue Messiahs

Like Bats Out Of Hell

THE Screaming Blue Messiahs are out and about in a world of their own. Comparisons won't do, because there *are* no comparisons. This is an uninhibited, untamed, almost primitive outpouring of individuality.

Bill Carter, vocalist, guitarist and writer, doesn't listen to the charts, doesn't own a record player, doesn't have a TV either. What he gives to the Messiahs and what they in turn give to us is something he can feel but not explain, and I think the key word is danger — the kind of danger that has always turned good bands into great ones, the kind of danger that you sense when you realise that the music you're listening to is bigger, much bigger, than the guitar, drums and bass that are making it.

"Our music is totally emotional and it's to do with some sort of power, psychological power," agrees Carter, a two-day shadow bristling over shaven head. "It's a bit like a drug — or what I've heard about drugs. I can't dwell on it too much because it's dangerous, psychologically dangerous. It used to affect me badly because I found it hard to recover from the effect the gigs used to have on me. I would end up not knowing where I was, really. In a way, that's why I try not to talk about it too much. I try to keep it at a distance. It is a powerful thing that we do, and it can become too important in your life. I want to keep it on one side so I don't have to live it.

"We're not trying to be heavy or anything like that, *but* the sheer force of the band — plus the kind of vibe of it — sometimes does get a bit.. maybe not dangerous, but very, very exciting. You just could not live like that. It wouldn't be a balanced way of living."

He may not want to talk about it, may not want to think about it, but Bill Carter, at the same time, recognises that this X factor — whatever it is — is the spark that illuminates the Messiahs, sets them apart and ultimately drives him forward in a business that he actively dislikes.

"I think we've got a bit of magic which is what *real* bands used to have," he muses. "I can't say what it is, but it's special and it's priceless. If it was just music we were doing, I wouldn't be interested."

It seems, however, that the things which are special and priceless to the band and their fans are the very things which are most perplexing to their record company. The Messiah's very singularity, their eccentricity, their refusal to conform to any one convenient musical style, makes them difficult to gift-wrap and sell to the public.

"I get the feeling that WEA think of us as their token 'rock' act, and don't really have a grasp of the band's potential," says Bill, removing his shades for the first time. "I could be wrong, but I'm usually right and I've yet to be convinced that they have the capabilities or the commitment to do this band justice.

"But having said that, I don't want to do a hatchet job on WEA. We know how it's gonna go. We're not the Jesus And Mary Chain. This band is building a slow but genuine following, and it's a long job. Keeping the excitement all the time, keeping things moving is part of it. I like the conviction of our band. The fact that it knows what it's doing.

"I also like the fact that it's probably an unlikely looking band. We go to places and they think we're the roadies or the managers or something, and afterwards they have to change their minds."

It's true. The Screaming Blue Messiahs couldn't look anything less like a band on the road, and yet this works to their advantage. Bill Carter, blustering around the stage, apparently in the grip of some uncontrollable mania, offers outrageously spectacular viewing. But performance — like every other personal aspect of his career in the band — is something he's reluctant to analyse too closely.

"I try not to think about what I do onstage," he insists. "I don't want to be a performing clown. We're not a travelling circus. People say it's like an ugly, anti-pop type of thing we do, but I don't think of it like that. I think it's onstage, a charismatic band. I think it's quite glamorous. When the Stones and the Who came out, people said they were *horribly* ugly. It was only when they were successful that everyone said how *glamorously* ugly they were. It's just people. There's different kinds of glamour."

The Screaming Blue Messiahs are asking us only for an honest hearing. Honesty's a strong point with this bunch. Ask Bill, for instance, about money and he'll tell you bluntly: "I need money. I'm miserable if I haven't got any money. I can spend more money than anybody I know if I've got it, and it's all on petrol. That's what I need it for. I don't buy anything else. The only thing I buy with money is freedom."

At the same time, the Messiahs will say there are some things more important than money, and you believe them.

BILL: "I suppose, ideally, I'd like to see us getting somewhere where we can really do what we want without worrying. I don't want to see three frustrated people at the end of five years. I'd just like us to be able to fulfill ourselves. If everybody in this band achieves their maximum potential, we all should lead pretty exciting lives. That's all I want, really."

CAROL CLERK

THE NIGHT TRIPPER MEETS THE DAWN

DR. JOHN's post-Voodoo *gris-gris*, explained with a little help from MARK DEMETRIUS...

FOR a man who quite recently kicked a 20 year heroin habit, Dr. John is in decidely robust condition. With his Falstaffian figure, old-fashioned grey suit, beret and cigarillos, he resembles a combination of Orson Welles and Peter Ustinov as Inspector Clousseau. Throw in a soft rumbling Louisiana accent and languid, almost motionless manner, and you begin to understand why he's been compared to a 'gator snoring on the Bayou.

All this is in marked contrast to the bizarre image with which Dr. John (the Night Tripper) first confronted white rock audiences in the late 60s. With his coloured robes and feathered headresses, he provoked a kind of bewilderment best depicted in *Rock Dreams* — Guy Pellaert and Nik Cohn's droll collection of rock'n'roll fantasy paintings. The Doctor is shown in full regalia, brandishing his voodoo walking stick outside a barbershop in a dusty rural town, and haranguing the befuddled locals.

Those exhibitionistic days are long gone, and for the past three and a half years Mac Rebennack (his real name) has been living in New York. In spirit and in musical style, however, he's as close as ever to his roots in New Orleans — "most of my family still live in the woods down there" — and returns five or six times a year to play at such legendary events as the Mardi Gras and the Jazz and Heritage Festival. He's quick to point out, in fact, that even the old stage antics were "not so much cultivatin' an image as bein' true to New Orleans *gris-gris*, or voodoo as you may call it. We made an album that was a picture of that, and because we also did a show that was true to it, it fitted into some kinda psychedelic act in the era, and in the venues we played. Over the years it became more separated, and when we had the girls dancin' with the snakes and all that stuff I think it was a little too authentic for some people!"

The inspiration for such ritualistic shenanigans is often said to be the late black singer Prince LaLa, though Rebennack begged to differ. "LaLa was a good friend of mine, and we worked sessions together, but I've heard this story for years that my show was an offshoot of his. Other than his publicity photo, which had LaLa decked out in a turban and looking very exotic, he never had much of a *gris-gris* stage show. If anybody could be credited with something that I got for mine..."

Screamin' Jay Hawkins?, I suggested, and he grinned. "That was who I was gonna say." Not a very clever hunch in view of Hawkins' massive influence on a pantheon of rocking shamans, from Lord Sutch to Arthur Brown and Alice Cooper.

But voodoo is, of course, only one of the countless ingredients which compose the marvellously rich cajun stew of New Orleans music. "I look at it as a very strong portion," he admitted, "but then so is, say, Catholic church music. All of it got combined somewhere along the line, and all I was tryin' to do when I made the *gris-gris* album was separate it again to show people what *that* was. When I was growing up in the 40s and 50s there was a much easier and more accessible scene in New Orleans, and I could walk within a few blocks' radius and hear miles of different kinds of music. Kids today don't get to hear as much variety."

I was reminded of an interview with Taj Mahal (*see story this issue*),another fervent eclecticist, in which he told me sadly of his disappointment that black kids seem so ignorant of their roots. Rebennack could only agree, though his explanation of the particular malaise in New Orleans was rather curious.

"When we were comin' up we worked for club owners, and they had us play music that *they* liked — we didn't play for the customers. The clubs made their money with the gamblin' and the prostitution and whatever else went on; they didn't depend on the music. When Jim Garrison was made District Attorney of New Orleans in 1963, he closed all the clubs where all the jammin' went on. There was a great progressive jazz movement going on there, and it just killed all that."

When I suggested that there was a certain irony in anti-corruption measures also removing something healthy, Rebennack shrugged that "the two always went hand in hand", and explained that the whole "sad state of affairs" only led the now-unemployed musicians more directly into criminal activities. His reservations about the *current* music scene can best be divined from a listen to the recent *Keep That Music Simple* single, and he was quick to attack the modern obsession with sophisticated pròduction.

"It's ridiculous. Who makes records like 'let's go and make it'? There's no such animule! The last project that we did with Jimmy Witherspoon *(the veteran blues shouter)* we did all live, and I've been trying to get that feeling of the old one-track recording scene. We're not trying to go backwards, just to make honest music again... At the same time I consciously avoid getting too wound up in any one thing, and I also did that *Jet Set* rap record. I got a lot of flak from people about using synthesisers on that one, but at the same time I had this piano solo album and people couldn't work out what direction I was going in. But I'm just goin' in the same direction — *making music*! That's why I hate all these names for things. You either play music good or bad, and that's about as much division as I like in music: all the rest is just somebody's concept."

THIS distaste for pigeonholing may have a lot to do with Rebennack's eclectic upbringing. With a father who sold records to black colleges and hotels, he grew up on "everything from bebop records by Miles Davis and Charlie Parker to a lot of Latin and Afro-Cuban records. That was as much of my childhood as Gene Autry or Roy Rogers. And people don't realise how many black people bought country and western records: Hank Williams was as big as Big Bill Broonzy! It all left a big mark on everything I do to this day."

Rebennack vividly recalled black r'n'b artists playing at country festivals like the Grand Ole Opry and the Louisiana Hoedown, which puts the lie to the glib cliche about rock'n'roll resulting from the intercession of white boys like Elvis — who supposedly brought the two traditions together for the first time. As he ruefully put it, "these guys got all the credit for something that had been started way before they were ever around."

Mac Rebennack describes his own ethnic background as "Heinz 57 varieties. There's two kinds of Indian — Choktaw and Crow — plus French, Spanish, German, Irish and a whole lot more. You name it, I got a little bit of it." But he's always been closely associated with black people, and for a time fronted a band of black Muslims from whom he "picked up the whole lifestyle. It was a better dietary environment, and though we disagreed about some things, basically we got on real good."

This strange tendency to see life virtually from a black viewpoint dates back to the influence of childhood guitar teachers like Walter 'Papoose' Nelson, Fats Domino's guitarist. Rebennack copied the style of his hero T-Bone Walker, and it was inevitable that he drifted into the black recording scene — eventually switching from guitar to piano after he was shot in the finger!

Rebennack did a stint in Fats Domino's backing band, and began a lifelong association with New Orleans giants like Allen Toussaint and Professor Longhair. Toussaint still jams with the Doctor at New York venues like the Village Gate and the Lone Star Cafe, but Longhair is sadly departed. He died, in fact, on the day his last album was released — a collaboration with Rebennack that carries the glorious title of *Crawfish Fiesta For Alligator*.

Though Rebennack's fieriest and most distinctive work has been on solo efforts such as *Gumbo*, he has a great love of "interplay" — which shows up to wonderful effect on the Hammond/Bloomfield/Dr. John album *Triumvirate*. With typical modesty he stressed that "it started out as a John Hammond album, and it was only because Michael and I had some kind of notoriety that it wound up that way — which is typical of the record business." He was equally dismissive of his illustrious history as a session muso on numerous group and solo Beatles projects, insisting that "the stuff that I've been doing with the early r'n'b writers was a bigger thrill for me."

Rebennack's future commitments include playing and producing for a wide variety of notables, though he has specifically "backed out of doing Rastafarian projects. I got very disillusioned with a lot o' these guys. My idea was to add some New Orleans funk to the reggae, but it wound up not being that. To me, from where guys like Bob Marley had taken this music to where it wound up is a big gap in between."

'Keeping that music simple' — and also making it exciting and diverse — is a fairly demanding balancing act, but one for which an old travelling showman like Dr. John is eminently suited. Like any skilled conjurer, he makes it look — and sound — deceptively easy, and his closing comments epitomised this goodnaturedly professional approach.

"I just try to play music to make people feel good, and hopefully feel like dancin' and havin' a good time. That's basically what New Orleans music is about — ain't nothin' but a party anyhow!"

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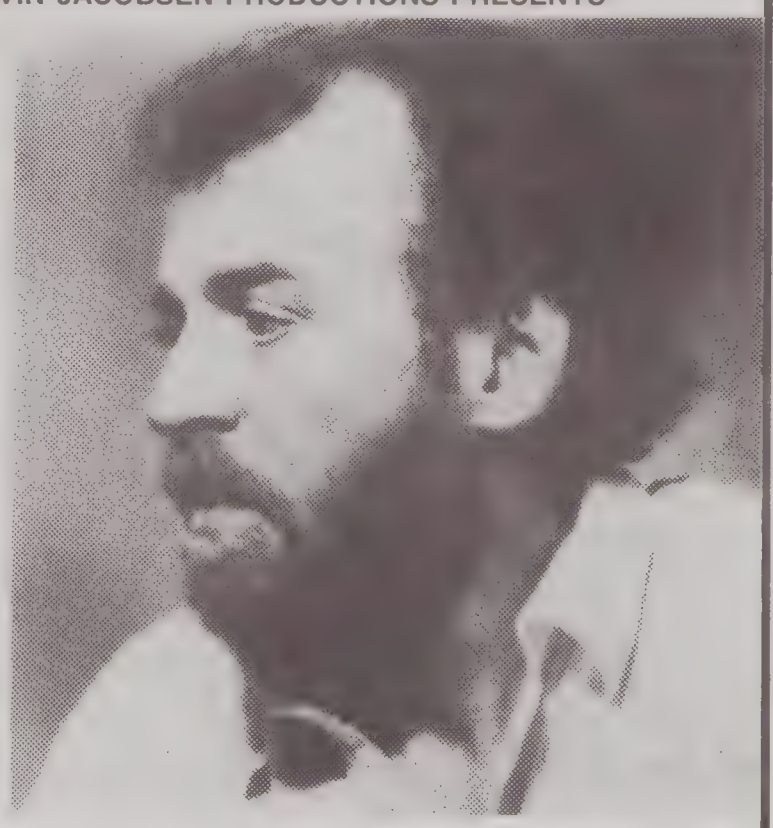

JOE COCKER

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TAJ MAHAL

The True Blues Stew

(Pic: Ian Greene)

IN LONDON back in 1962, it was considered hip to be a purist. That's why six young musicians who met in the jazz/blues clubs under the auspices of British blues legends Alexis Korner and Cy Davies formed a band called the Rolling Stones, after a Muddy Waters tune.

In the best British tradition, the Poms were soon selling their white limey version of black American blues back to the Americans. The first thing many of these 'British invaders' did when they hit the States was to check out their heroes. Suddenly the world (of rock 'n' roll, at least) was rediscovering the legends — Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Junior Walker. Howlin' Wolf recorded in London with Clapton and the 'quiet Stones' — Wyman and Watts — but was later heard to mutter, "Those cats want to play the blues so bad, and that's how they play it... so *bad*!"

So it was inevitable that one night in LA, Taj Mahal looked into the audience and saw Jagger, Richards, Clapton and Burdon raging away as if to convince all and sundry that *this* was hip; this was the 'real thing'. By that time, of course — 1968 — the Stones had moved light years away from those blues roots, but they were still purists at heart.

Jagger fixed it for Mahal to tour his particular brand of blues around Britain and Europe, conscripting him for the legendary but as yet never-released Stones home movie, *Rock 'n' Roll Circus*, which featured Eric Clapton, the 'rootsiest' Beatle — John Lennon — and novelist/prankster Ken Kesey (*One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*). Taj was a token gesture to the blues roots, a plum for the purists.

The point of this preamble — apart from a little name-dropping — is to advise that if you decide to check out this particular 'blues legend' on his upcoming tour, don't go expecting a purist. During his 20-odd year musical career, Taj Mahal has gone beyond the somewhat narrow parameters of what we understand as black American blues and explored — no, *studied* all aspects of the black music experience, bringing his uniquely eclectic style to bear on elements of jazz, folk, rock and reggae, from the Carribean to 11 West African countries. It seemed appropriate to ring him at his sister's place in Boston, Massachusetts and ask him what he thinks of the 'purist' attitude to music.

"As far as my own life is concerned, my musical interests have always been diversified, but on record I suppose that diversity didn't show itself to the public until toward the end of the 60s. That's when my music started going in different directions.

"After all, what is a purist? I never *was* a purist in that sense. I was trying to play a music that was as clean and as close to the *intent* of that black music as possible. A lot of these so-called purists are playing derivative-type music, anyhow, and they've never actually heard the basic sound of the music."

Taj Mahal grew up "like everyone else", listening to all kinds of music — jazz, bebop, gospel, spiritual and classical. His parents were musical, and their interests ranged from Latin and West Indian styles to some popular music, big band and progressive jazz. As a boy, he tuned into big band r'n'b — which, by his teenage years, had metamorphosed into rock'n'roll.

"It was interesting, having that kind of background, seeing rock'n'roll as a kind of blues that was a little faster with a kind of swing in it, and I'd wonder where were those ideas coming from, where was this stuff coming across? That was where I got interested in the way musical styles developed and I got interested in exploring the roots, which took me into blues, then jazz, and through African rhythms and so on."

As American popular music became more and more "deodorised", as he puts it, with white pop and Motown filling the 60s airwaves, it was the British blues revival that pulled him out of more electric jazz styles and revived his own interest in the original blues players — many of whom were by now in their 60s and 70s.

Which partly explains his own preference for working as a soloist, although he's also recorded with a band. His last Australian tour featured a bass guitarist and drummer, and some sessions he recorded here during that tour will appear on his forthcoming album. This time, however, Taj Mahal is touring alone. As a multi-instrumentalist — besides guitar, he plays banjo, mandolin, bass, piano, harmonica, vibes and dulcimer as well as a variety of African percussion instruments — the sounds he creates should make for an interesting show. Because of his fascination for music and its derivation, he's earned a reputation as something of an academic, a musicologist — a label he dismisses as "like pouring cold water on a pair of excited lovers". He warms to his theme:

"People read that I've been to college and they instantly label what you're doing, because they say, 'Hey, we've got an intelligent person here.' What I've found is that a lot of people have been caught by the *romance* of the blues — the apparent simplicity and poverty that surrounded its beginnings — and yet, when they hear these guys and say how brilliant they are to be playing like they do, they start to contradict themselves, saying that someone so brilliant can't really play that way to make such simple music. Yet those same people lionise Eric Clapton and he's a very intelligent man. Mick Jagger and Keith Richard, they're both very intelligent men, and they owe their success to the blues, whether they admit it or not."

In this country, most are only now starting to discover the music of modern Africa through excursions by white artists such as Stewart Copeland. But the music of King Sunny Ade, Bella and others has long been a passion for Mahal, and he has visited and collected recordings from Ghana, the Congo, Burundi, Dahomey — all in his inquisitive search for the roots of his own music. Then there is his interest in West Indian rhythms, inherited from his West Indian mother. He currently lives in Hawaii, and the rhythms of Polynesia are becoming an element in his work as well.

The African experience in particular has confirmed a lot of his thoughts on music and its origins, especially in the lack of compromise, the "watering down" whereby western artists make their music palatable. In Africa, he says, "Each man is a vehicle for the music that comes from inside himself, and the artistic expression isn't compromised in any way. That kind of honesty and heart in your work, in the States, people just can't handle.

"But to me, the music has to be from the heart. If I never sell more than a few albums doesn't matter to me if what I've recorded is real and uncompromised. I've been very lucky that there are a few people that have understood that and helped me sustain a career by playing what is basically a very uncommercial kind of music — and I wouldn't have it any other way. And I have had a lot of fun out of it. I just really enjoy playing, solo and in a band. And I try to get that fun across to the audience."

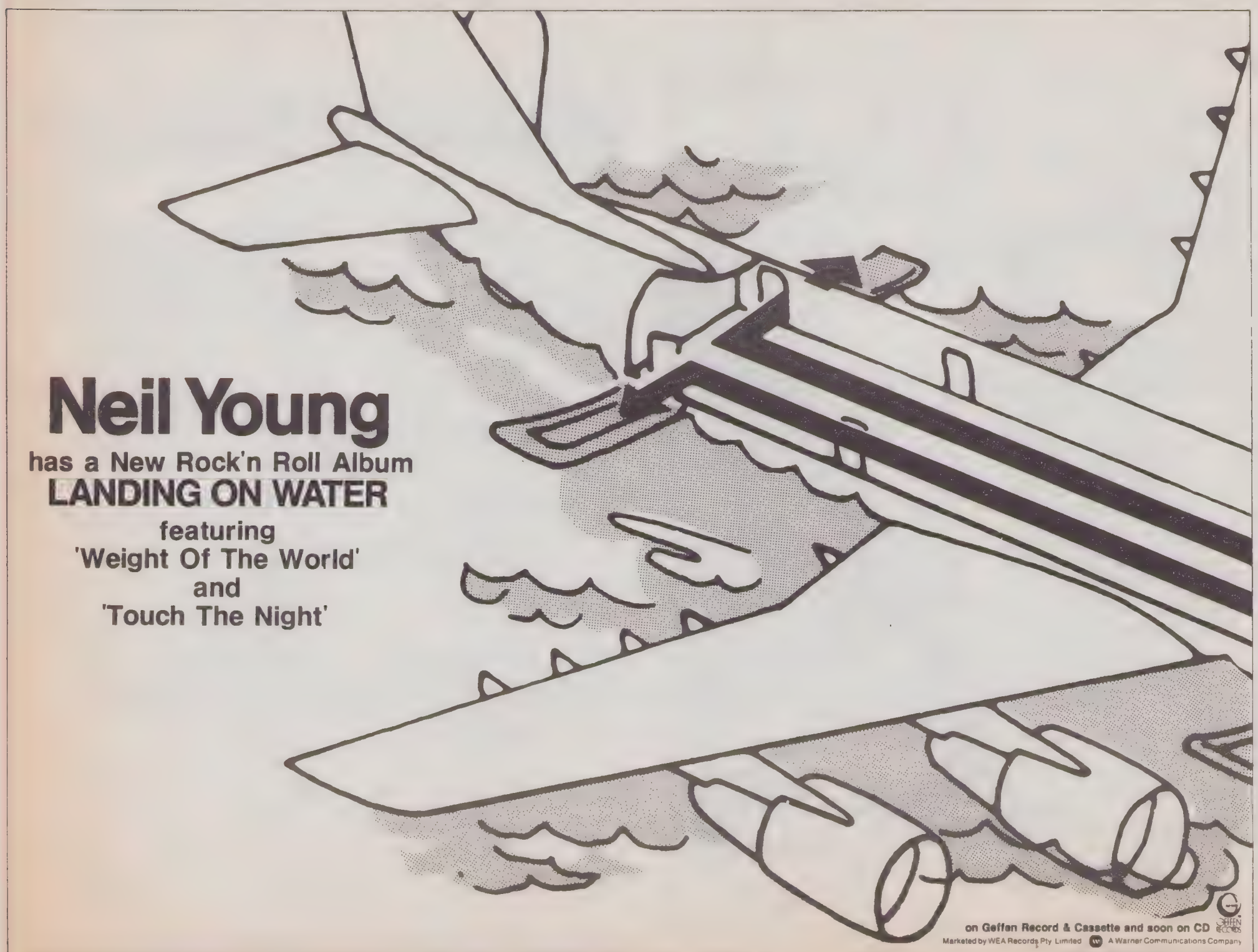
Taj Mahal is not unaware of Australia's own developing black music, either. While touring here the last time he picked up on No Fixed Address, whom he much admires. His support band on that tour, the Herbs, are another, and he's included a couple of their songs on his new album. It was his first visit here that suggested to him that he might slow his work pace down a little and live in a climate like ours, eventually opting for Hawaii. There, his growing awareness of the Polynesian experience promoted two new songs — *Light Of The Pacific* and *French Letter*, pointed comment on French nuclear testing.

"No Fixed Address, though, they really blew me out. The last thing I have of them is from '83, the *From My Eyes* set. We toured together and hung out quite a bit. But I've made tapes for a lot of native Americans in pueblos in New Mexico and up in Montana, North and South Dakota, and they just *love* No Fixed Address. The Indians really get into what they have to say.

"Oh, I like what's happening in Australia and I'm looking foward to catching up."

Spoken more like a *fan* than a musicologist...

MICHAEL SMITH



CHARTS

AUSTRALIA NOW

SINGLES

TF	LF	TITLE	ARTIST	LABEL
1	1	**STONEAGE CINDERELLA**	Died Pretty	Citadel
2	3	**BEFORE TOO LONG**	Paul Kelly & Coloured Girls	White
3	4	**THE GIRL IN THE SWEATER**	Hard Ons	Waterfront
4	17	• **GOD'S NOT DEAD**	Slaughtermen	Au-Go-Go
5	19	**BIG COUNTRY**	John Kennedy	Red Eye
6	7	**MONEY GOD (EP)**	Big Pig	Big Pig
7	16	• **THE SINGER (aka The Folksinger)**	Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds	Mute
8	—	• **VIRGINIA**	Bamboos	Citadel
9	11	**DEFECATE ON MY FACE**	This Is Serious Mum	Elvis
10	5	**BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT**	Crystal Set	Red Eye
11	—	**END IT ALL**	Inner Sleeves	Citadel
12	—	**LIES**	Bo-Weevils	Kavern 7
13	8	**THE LIVING KIND**	Ups & Downs	True Tone
14	6	**JOHNNY AND DEE DEE**	Eastern Dark	Waterfront
15	20	**HOLY WORD**	I'm Talking	Regular
16	—	**STAND-BY FLIGHT**	Howard I Know	Red Eye
17	—	**INDIGNATION**	Porcelain Bus	Citadel
18	10	**I WILL PERSUADE YOU**	Huxton Creepers	Big Time
19	—	**TROUSERS IN ACTION (EP)**	Various	
20	2	**BLEEDING HEART**	Johnnys	Mushroom

Compiled with assistance from:
FLOPPY DISK, PHANTOM, RED EYE, WATERFRONT, DIZZY SPINNERS, GREVILLE, MISSING LINK & UMBRELLA.

ALBUMS

TF	LF	TITLE	ARTIST	LABEL
1	2	**LONG LIVE THE NEW FLESH (Mini LP)**	Eastern Dark	Waterfront
2	8	**FREE DIRT**	Died Pretty	Citadel
3	—	• **HIGHLIGHTS OF A DANGEROUS LIFE**	Johnnys	Mushroom
4	5	**DESTROY DULL CITY (Mini LP)**	Psychotic Turnbuckles	Rattlesnake
5	20	**RIVERS OF CORN**	Zimmermen	Au-Go-Go
6	10	**LOVE WILL GROW (Mini LP)**	Stems	Citadel
7	1	**THE TURGID MIASMA OF EXISTENCE**	Celibate Rifles	Hot
8	—	• **BIG BIGOT**	Severed Heads	Volition
9	7	**DATE WITH A VAMPYRE**	Screaming Tribesmen	Citadel
10	3	**THE MOFFS (Mini LP)**	Moffs	Citadel
11	13	**5 REASONS**	Garden Path	Greasy Pop
12	6	**12 DAYS TO PARIS**	Huxton Creepers	Big Time
13	15	**13th HOUR DAYDREAM (Mini LP)**	Lizard Train	Greasy Pop
14	—	**STOP**	Little Murders	Au-Go-Go
15	12	**ALL FOOLS DAY**	Saints	Mushroom
16	14	**HUMAN FRAILTY**	Hunters & Collectors	White
17	—	**WHEN THE FABRIC'S TORN**	White Cross	Crash
18	—	**BEAR WITNESS**	I'm Talking	Regular
19	—	**SOUND OF SYDNEY, Vol 3**	Various	Method
20	—	**SLAB OF VIC**	Various	Au-Go-Go

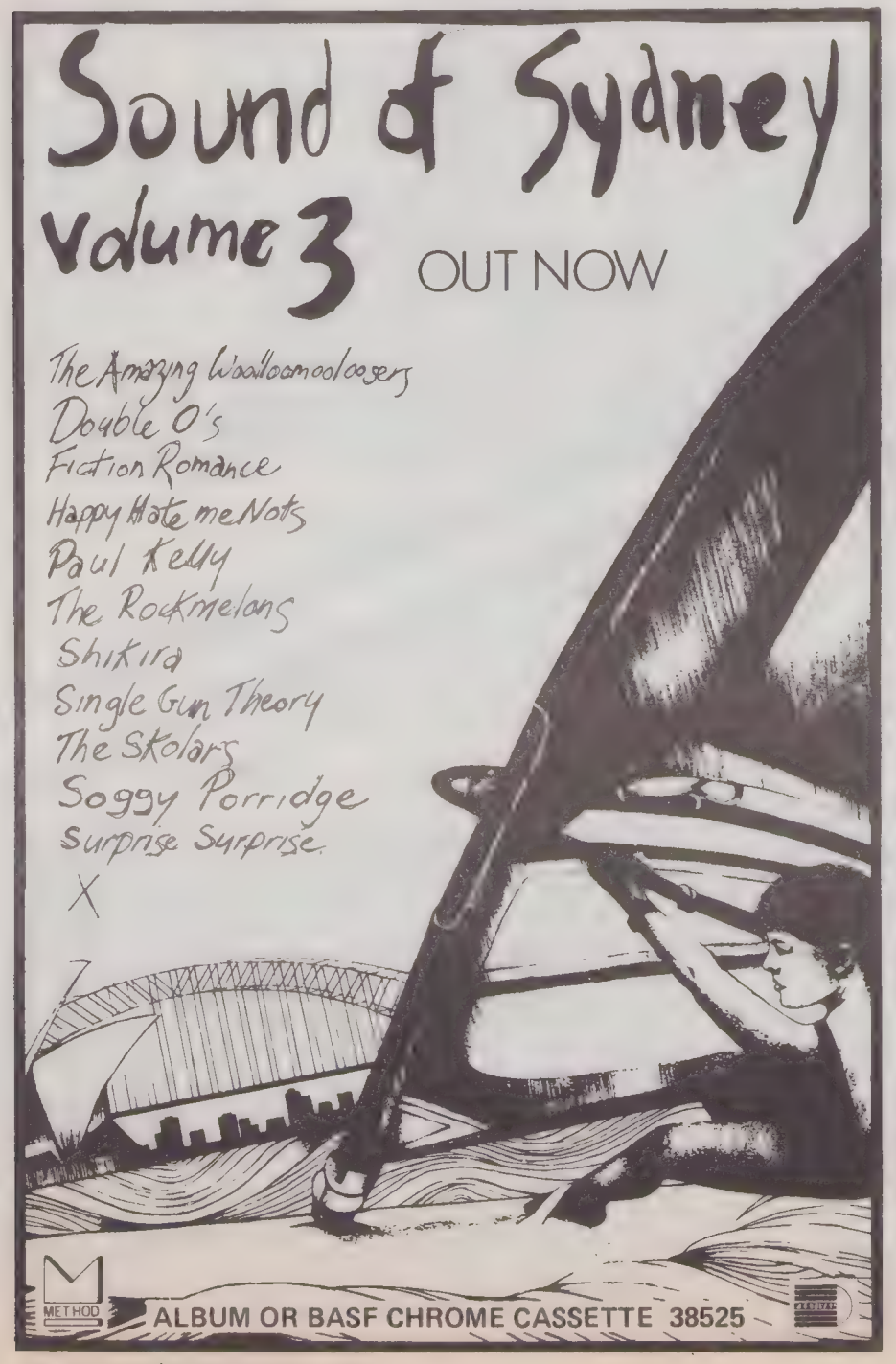
NEW RELEASES

SINGLES

HOLLYWOOD BEYOND ..... What's The Colour Of Money? (WEA)
TOMMY KEENE ..... Listen To Me (WEA)
PRINCE & THE REVOLUTION ..... Anotherloverholenyohead (WEA)
TANGO BRAVO* ..... Blood Is The Colour (FES)
SCRIBBLE* ..... Don't Give Your Heart Away (FES)
MARK EDWARDS* ..... Only A Love (WEA)
PATTI LaBELLE ..... Oh, People (WEA)
DRAGON* ... Dreams Of Ordinary Men (POL)
LOVE & MONEY .... Candybar Express (POL)
LEVEL 42 ..... Lessons In Love (POL)
KOO DE TAH* ..... Think Of Me (POL)
BUCKS FIZZ ..... New Beginning (POL)
SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY & THE JUKES ..... Walk Away Renee (RCA)
MONKEES. That Was Then, This is Now (RCA0
TOM ROBINSON ..... The Real Thing (RCA)
LATIN QUARTER ..... Modern Times (RCA)
FX* ..... Getting Better (RCA)
SMOKEY ROBINSON ..... Sleepless Nights (RCA)
TECHNICIANS* .... Soldier Of Fortune (RCA)
HEADHUNTERS* ..... I Believe I'm In Love (RCA)
KATE BUSH ..... The Big Sky (EMI)
RED GUITARS ..... America And Me (EMI)
CÁRL BEAN .....I Was Born This Way (EMI)
ARMOURY SHOW ....Castles In Spain (EMI)
GEISHA* ..... Part Time Love Affair (EMI)
PAUL McCARTNEY ..... Press (EMI)
DOBIE GRAY .....That's One To Grow On (EMI)
DUMPTRUCK ..... Back Where I Belong (EMI)
WA WA NEE* ..... I Could Make You Love Me (CBS)
JIMMY CLIFF/ELVIS COSTELLO ..... Seven Day Weekend (CBS)
CYNDI LAUPER .....True Colours (CBS)
SPANDAU BALLET .....Fight For Ourselves (CBS)
MODELS* .....Evolution (FES)
BILLY JOEL .....Matter Of Trust (CBS)
NICOLE ..... Don't You Want My Love (CBS)

ALBUMS

METALLICA ..... Master Of Puppets (WEA)
LOUDNESS ..... Lightning Strikes (WEA)
SCREAMING BLUE MESSIAHS ..... Gun Shy (WEA)
LIMITED WARRANTY ..... Limited Warranty (WEA)
CHAKA KHAN ..... Destiny (WEA)
NEIL YOUNG ..... Landing On Water (WEA)
LARRY CARLTON ..... Alone But Never Alone (WEA)
JOHN JARVIS .....So Far So Good (WEA)
ALBERT LEE ..... Speechless (WEA)
EDGAR MEYER ..... Unfolding (WEA)
ROBERT GREENIDGE/MICHAEL UTLEY .....Mad Music (WEA)
HANK WILLIAMS JNR ..... Montana Cafe (WEA)
VARIOUS ..... Go Go Crankin' (FES)
JESSE JOHNSON .....Jesse Johnson's Revue (FES)
STEVE WINWOOD .....Back In The High Life (FES)
JOHNNYS* ..... Highlights Of The Dangerous Life (FES)
ROYS .....Kicked Off The Train (FES)
UB40 ..... Rat In The Kitchen (EMI)
RED GUITARS .....Tales Of The Expected (EMI)
FX* .....Personal (RCA)
KINKS ..... Come Dancing With The Kinks (RCA)
JIMMY CLIFF ..... Club Paradise (CBS)
JANIE FRICKIE ..... Black/White (CBS)
QUIET RIOT .....QR III (CBS)
WILKO JOHNSON ..... Solid Senders (EMI)
DREAM SYNDICATE ..... Out Of The Grey (EMI)
EXILE ..... Hang On To Your Heart (CBS)
BILL NELSON .....On A Blue Wing (CBS)
R.E.M. .....Life's Rich Pageant (CBS)
MICKEY GILLEY .....One And Only (CBS)
STEPHEN CUMMINGS* ..... This Wonderful Life (POL)
UPS & DOWNS* ..... Sleepless (POL)
BRIAN ENO .....Before And After Science (POL)



MAINSTREAM JIVE

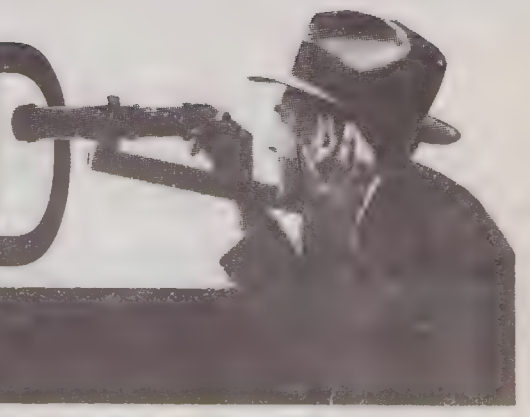
SINGLES

TW	LW	HP	TITLE	ARTIST	LABEL
1	1	1	**PAPA DON'T PREACH**	Madonna	WEA
2	8	2	• **SPIRIT IN THE SKY**	Dr. & the Medics	CBS
3	—	3	**THE DEAD HEART (12")**	Midnight Oil	CBS
4	3	1	**TOUCH ME (I want Your Body)**	Samantha Fox	EMI
5	5	3	**STIMULATION**	Wa Wa Nee	CBS
6	—	6	• **VENUS**	Bananarama	EMI
7	6	4	**I WANNA BE A COWBOY**	Boys Don't Cry	FES
8	—	8	• **DANCING ON THE CEILING**	Lionel Richie	RCA
9	7	7	**WHEN TOMORROW COMES**	Eurythmics	RCA
10	2	2	**THE EDGE OF HEAVEN**	Wham!	CBS
11	4	3	**INVISIBLE TOUCH**	Genesis	EMI
12	—	12	• **HOLY WORD**	I'm Talking	EMI
13	10	8	**WHO MADE WHO?**	AC/DC	EMI
14	—	14	• **HANDS UP IN THE AIR**	Boom Crash Opera	WEA
15	9	9	**ALL I NEED IS A MIRACLE**	Mike & the Mechanics	WEA
16	18	16	**HOLDING BACK THE YEARS**	Simply Red	WEA
17	—	17	• **GLORY OF LOVE (Theme from 'Karate Kid Part II')**	Peter Cetera	WEA
18	—	18	• **YOUR WILDEST DREAMS**	Moody Blues	POL
19	—	19	**DON'T YOU LOVE ME ANYMORE?**	Joe Cocker	EMI
20	12	11	**THERE'LL BE SAD SONGS (To Make You Cry)**	Billy Ocean	EMI

ALBUMS

TW	LW	HP	TITLE	ARTIST	LABEL
1	3	1	**REVENGE**	Eurythmics	RCA
2	1	1	**TRUE BLUE**	Madonna	WEA
3	2	1	**WHITNEY HOUSTON**	Whitney Houston	RCA
4	4	2	**INVISIBLE TOUCH**	Genesis	EMI
5	—	5	• **THE BRIDGE**	Billy Joel	CBS
6	6	6	**THE FINAL**	Wham!	CBS
7	5	2	**SCARECROW**	John Cougar Mellencamp	POL
8	13	8	• **PICTURE BOOK**	Simply Red	WEA
9	12	9	**KEV'S BACK**	Kevin "Bloody" Wilson	CBS
10	10	9	**A KIND OF MAGIC**	Queen	EMI
11	7	6	**WHO MADE WHO?**	AC/DC	EMI
12	11	9	**LOVE ZONE**	Billy Ocean	EMI
13	—	13	• **BEAR WITNESS**	I'm Talking	FES
14	—	14	• **STANDING ON THE BEACH — THE SINGLES**	Cure	WEA
15	9	9	**BRING ON THE NIGHT**	Sting	FES
16	8	6	**"PRETTY IN PINK" Soundtrack**	Various	FES
17	17	12	**COCKER**	Joe Cocker	EMI
18	14	4	**SO**	Peter Gabriel	EMI
19	—	19	• **"TOP GUN" Soundtrack**	Various	CBS
20	16	1	**FOR THE WORKING CLASS MAN**	Jimmy Barnes	FES

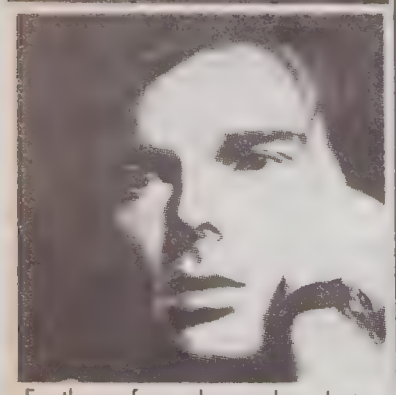
SEEN and HEARD



RECORDS • LIVE ACTS

No Contest

VAN MORRISON
No Guru, No Method, No Teacher
(Mercury)



For those of you who may have lost the faith sometime in the last few years, this magnificent return to form will come as a major shock to the system. And *that*, children of the revolution, is no small compliment to pay.

Morrison's increasingly experimental style of writing is a fair indication of how the passing years have not dulled the old bastard's justifiable tendency to stand apart from the poor imitations and the desperate pretenders to the throne.

'Copycats ripped off my words/ copycats ripped off my songs/copycats ripped off my melody' he snarls, and you can't really say fairer than that. Ultimately, of course, *'all that matters is my relationship with you'* and it's as if 20 years of that same old message of personal communication triumphing over all else are being distilled into this one emphatic statement.

If *A Town Called Paradise* is the strongest hands-off warning on the album, then *Got To Go Back* is the definitive cry of the exile for his beloved homeland. It's been obvious in recent years that Morrison has been engaged in a retreat, both lyrically and stylistically, to his Northern Irish roots, and *Got To Go Back* is the nearest he's ever come to packing it in once and for all and heading for the Stranraer boat.

'When I was a young boy back in Orangefield' is the very first line of the album, and it immediately sets the scene for this journey through old Ray Charles' records and the days of meditation until there is the ultimate recognition that all this intellectual baggage is useless in a rootless void. *'I've been living in another country/that operates along entirely different lines/ keep me away from port or whisky/don't play anything sentimental/it'll make me cry'*, sings Van, and it's so close to home that it hurts.

The stunning closer on Side One, *In The Garden*, is a virtual musical meditation, slowly building its way up to a spiritual coda, wherein Morrison calls upon the Son, Father and Holy Ghost, again reaching a selfless state of transcendence where the only answer is one of complete surrender to the mood and to this music of rare beauty.

Here Comes The Knight is further affirmation of the power of love, quoting Yeats along the way: *Thanks For The Information* is confirmation that wordplay always comes easy to a Belfast poet; and even *Ivory Tower*, with its uptempo pop appeal, threatens more than the likes of Nick Cave could ever dream of.

No Guru is Van Morrison's 21st album, and it sounds as fresh and as crucial to these ears as anything he did in '69, '75 or any other time inbetween. Van Morrison is old enough to be my dad, he's fat and he's bald and he wipes the floor with the best of them. No method, no guru, no teacher, no contest.

BARRY McILHENEY

THE CRAMPS/THE JOHNNYS/ THE HARD-ONS/

(Selina's, Sydney)

Lux In Lame (All pix: Ian Greene)

Ivy pulls off a minor chord

The HARD-ONS have the unfortunate knack of combining the worst aspects of heavy metal and punk, with none of the redeeming features of either. On this night at least, they displayed the monumental crassness of metal without any of its usual musical proficiency, and the primitivism of the most anonymous thrash band — without one glimmer of punk's wit, imagination or excitement.

Protracted guitar-wanks, pointless feedback, embarrassing posing: you name it, they were afflicted by it. The 'songs' were virtually indistinguishable, and though burning with misdirected energy, got bogged down in torpidity every time they picked up speed. The extremely limited appeal of the Hard-Ons' attack palled rapidly, and disappeared entirely when they desecrated the Stooges' *T.V. Eye* and the Crystals' *Then He Kissed Me* (with lyrics changed to *'I Kissed Her...'*). The dismal set concluded with Peter Black smashing his guitar, and one could only regret that he didn't do it before the show. Perhaps I should have expected cock-rock with a name like that; but if this is what Hard-Ons are like, gimme a cold spoon!

Something impressive was sorely needed at this point, and the JOHNNYS provided it. Starting from a position of relaxed confidence and solidity, they seemed to get more animated with each successive song. *Greenback Dollar* was joyful and jaunty, *Move It* faster than I can ever recall, and *Marty Robbins* — well, that engendered the warm thrill of recognition common to most great songs. *Bleeding Heart* made us marvel at its intricate melody all over again, and the Johnnys charged on relentlessly, buoyed up by the consummate drumming of Billy Pommer Jr. ("the best drummer in the Johnnys", as Spencer P. Jones proclaimed). Perhaps it's the eventual release of their album, but the band seems to have acquired a whole new reservoir of 'rebel-yelling' enthusiasm, and the old songs sounded remarkably new. They ended with *Showdown*, augmented by something that *was* new — a delightful display of can-can dancing by the Texan Floozies.

By this stage Selina's was packed to the point of Suffocating Room Only, and it wasn't very pleasant. The sheer congealed mass of sweaty uncomfortable people was obviously a recipe for trouble, and there was plenty to come. But when the CRAMPS walked on, with Lux Interior as gold-lame 50s impresario and Ivy Rorschach as the stripper with the built-in sneer, such apprehensions were momentarily forgotten. It being the anniversary of Elvis's death, they launched into a frenzied *Heartbreak Hotel* which made John Cale's version sound faithful to the original. The followup, *How Far Can Too Far Go?*, articulated what was to prove the evening's burning question: there was to be enough intensity and 'realness' to satisfy anyone, but at a disturbingly high price.

Musically the Cramps were at their most elemental, with the accent heavily on Candy Del Mar's bass-throb — especially for a band that had once flaunted the absence of a bassplayer. Ivy's buzzing guitar was fractured and taut to the point of neurosis, and Nick Knox thumped away with a kind of lazily implacable aggression.

But this was very much Lux's show. From the moment he appeared, chattering inaudibly and looking possessed, he was not only the focal point but the *raison-d'etre* of the performance. And what a performance! If you think you've seen unfettered male sexuality on stage, you haven't unless you've seen Lux. This was a species of steaminess which went beyond sex, beyond even parody, to a point of paradoxical sterility. The microphone was stroked, bashed, sucked, stuck into a bottle of red wine, shoved down his pants (along with the bottle), bashed again, the bottle was smashed... and so it went on. Lux guzzled wine from a high-heel shoe which he then kicked into the audience, pouted, leered, crouched, rubbed his crotch and crawled all over the stage screaming "it's so hot, it's so hot...". There was none of the old horror-movie ambience here, no element of kitsch or metaphor — the malice was all sexual, and so real that coy allusion became superfluous. It was mesmerising.

The Cramps did very few of their old songs — not that anyone cared, as everything segued into one sustained ceremony. They whooped through the Phantom's *Love Me ('every muscle in my body's BURNING WITH DESIRE')*, and climaxed — as it were — with *Can Your Pussy Do The Dog?*

As the onstage aggression increased, so did the audience's. I've never subscribed to the mentality which blames the Stones for Altamont, and I'm sure the Cramps didn't *want* people to get hurt, but their disregard for what happened was at best appallingly naive. There were brawls everywhere, and the violence lacked even the crude redeeming feature of Us-vs-Them anti-authoritarianism: as people were slung headfirst offstage by the security thugs, the crowd roared its approval.

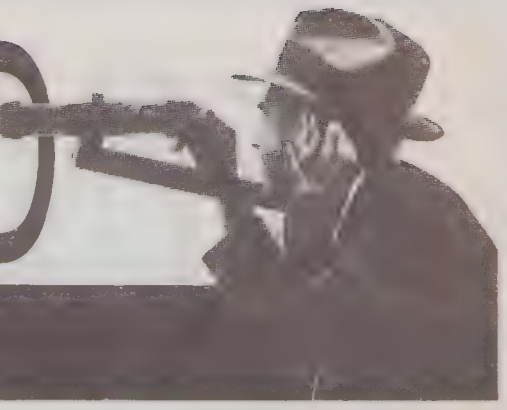
I *had* been looking forward to the inevitable encore of *Surfin' Bird*, but the pleasure was tempered in such a context. Lux drawled that "there are people starving in Africa, but I can't think of anything to say about that so, I'll just say *'surfin' bird'*!"; on another occasion it would have been hilarious, but tonight the amorality was too pointed. He squeezed the sweat from his glove, stuffed it in his mouth, stripped to his underpants and mounted the speakers. When it was all over, I watched — numb and confused — as a bouncer threw a mic-stand at someone's head. The victim sat on the stage, staring in bemusement at his blood-covered hands.

How far *can* too far go?

MARK DEMETRIUS

Lux beats up the SM-58

SEEN and HEARD



RECORDS • LIVE ACTS •

Dance One Out, Sit One Out

I'M TALKING
Bear Witness
(Regular)

We're talking poles apart. All of us were around in the late 70s, when Pop went to its respective corners and came out fighting. Out of the extreme left came Punk, spitting and gouging, putting an angry torch to the rulebooks. On the Right and dressed to the sixes and nines was Disco, with the accent on fancy footwork and the brain stuck in neutral. God help the Referee — with his/her (his and hers?) long hair, sandals and towel soaked in patchouli, it was no fun in the middle. No fun anywhere else either, with the weight of the world and the Genesis back-catalogue pinning each shoulder to a whole earth netherworld...

They may not have been hippies, but most of I'm Talking managed to straddle both camps. The band's creative nucleus evolved out of Essendon Airport, an early 80s Melbourne art-school aberration with its roots in punk and branch lines into funk. The word of mouth became flesh in motion with the addition of Kate and Zan, and so I'm Talking bade us to listen. That was 1983.

Trust Me, they said, and *Someday* they'd *Lead The Way*. The pattern was set, and I'm Talking were to develop into Australia's hippest singles band: big on the dancefloor, tight on the rhythm reins and light on the intellect. Classy fluff for the navel of young modern Australia.

Funny how yesterday's radicals become today's conservatives. En route from art clique to disco palace, I'm Talking had arrived in the Middle — they were too straight for the pubs and too chic for the clubs, yet filled both with wildly gyrating bodies. Here at last was a jukebox we could pay attention to, without it intruding on our Saturday night mating rituals.

And mating rituals are what I'm Talking are all about, though their inherent contrasts have been preserved on *Bear Witness*. The cold, metronomic calculation of drum machine and sequencer comes face to (inter) face with the warm blast of saxophone and voice in an unholy celebration of sex in the 80s. We're talking stylish rhythm grooves bereft of feel but bright on propulsion, vocal entreaties steeped in suggestion yet light on substance. We're talking *schizoid*.

Produced by ex Material drummer Fred Maher (now a Scritto Politto) and Martyn Webster, *Bear Witness* suffers for an over-reliance on technology — but ain't that the 80s? Already burdened with a bass player who buys rhythms with a fistful of notes (when often one or two will do), the grooves are further complicated by drum programmes so rigidly arranged you'd need a degree to decipher them. (So I'm Talking's ex-drummer Cameron Newman found out, came time to reproduce Fred Maher's sanscript compu-rhythms). By contrast, both Robert Goodge's guitar and Ian Cox's sax are almost politely restrained, not to say downright tasteful. Which leaves the keyboards, ranging from purely incidental to ambient lush, particularly on the ballads. Even the track order reinforces a pervading sense of duality — eight songs in all, each up-tempo feeler immediately followed by a slow grower. Dance one out, sit one out.

When not meshing call-and-response style on the choruses, those much-heard voices are doing their damnedest to stake out individual territory. Though almost untouchable in this country for sheer pitch control and vocal animation, Kate Ceberano is these days matching Madonna squeal for breathy squeal in the upper register — a region she rarely strays from. Altogether smokier and far more sensual are Zan's occasional leads, proving with *Holy Word* that she's just as saleable too.

It's not until you hear I'm Talking over the full distance of this debut album that faint suspicions of predictability tickle the ears. Where the exhilirating bounce of one of their past singles would leap off the airwaves like a stone skipping on water, a long-play tends to sit heavy in the harbour. After the shuck'n'jive of the singles (*Do You Wanna Be... Mah Laaarve?* and *Holy Word... Hollywood Be Thy Name?*), both the diction and the pace settle down until Side Two's opener *Stay With Me* revives proceedings with a pulse of serious intent. Suddenly *It's Over*, done slow and hard done by, as Kate aments yet another failed encounter with the boy of her heart's dreams. *Disaster*, up next in more ways than one, is of altogether more reckless disposition: *'Life is dangerous/stick around'*, sings Kate, and we're compelled at last... until the closing *Love Means Everything*, another pledge of breathless devotion couched in the gentle groove.

We're talking polarisation.

PHIL STAFFORD

No Doze

UPS & DOWNS
Sleepless
(True Tone)

Flavour of the month has turned into flavour of the year for Ups & Downs, and on the strength of *Sleepless*, is threatening to turn into something larger again.

This set has lived in my tape deck for a few months now, and although on occasion I have thought of applying araldite to the cassette and to the 'play' button, *Sleepless* is not perfect. It is not the saviour of Australian music. Ups & Downs are an astoundingly good band, but seeing them live recently has only reassured me that there is even better material to come than that on display here.

Sleepless is a mini album designed to show the broader spectrum of Ups & Downs. So far, their singles have etched them out as a timeless pop band, but much of their material mines a richer vein, hiding a darker, more powerful edge. The quasi-mystical lyrics contribute even more atmosphere to the soaring and/or brooding guitar melodies, evening out their image, leaving the listener with a rounder, more textured view of the band than past singles might have suggested.

Sleepless (it always felt like a ten-incher to me, but here it is on twelve) opens with the seductive, undulating title track, an instrumental in which guitars pin down and counterpoint each other, though allowing a rich and sensual feel. From there, it's into the sublime pop of *The Living Kind*, already storming various independent and radio charts and bound for wider success, it seems. *Heart* bares only faint relation to its anagrammatical predecessor, *Traeh* (which appeared on the B-side of *In The Shadows*) and is perhaps the least appealing of the tunes here, held back by a chorus line that doesn't really seem to fit. *Alarming Situations* rounds out Side One with a strong vocal hook and an unfolding melody, owing a little to the Cure in its mid-section.

Turn it over, and the Ups & Downs' irresistible pop treatment is lent to Neil Diamond's *Solitary Man* at the start of Side Two. It's so good it virtually leaps out of the speakers and lands at your feet. This is followed by *Where Is The Sun?*, my favourite track on the record — a slower, gentler tune which builds into a yearning chorus, packed full of the distinctive two-part harmonies that make up so much of this band's appeal. Last but not least is *Travelling*, the heaviest song on display, full of ratchetty guitarwork (a la *Sunday Bloody Sunday*) and wrenching vocals. Placed (as it is in their live set) at the end, it's a fitting climax.

The end result is one of the finest Australian records released this year — and who thought it wouldn't be? It's not without its flaws, but I'm (for one) not worried — every record they make is better than the last, and I can't wait to hear what the next one brings...

JON CASIMIR

SEVERED HEADS/CRUSH KILL DESTROY/ BUILT IN GHOSTS

(Chauvel Cinema, Sydney)

"Get off! Get off! All you ever make is noise... and you never wash the dishes."

Ahh, juxtaposition! The core of Severed Heads' entertainment, and in fact, the pivoting force of the whole evening...

The Chauvel cinema was a superb choice of venue for the event. Since (inexplicably) no-one dances at Severed Heads gigs anyway, you might as well make the punters comfortable. It was good to see the 'Full House' sign out on Friday as well, showing that the Heads have achieved increased recognition in their own country over the last year — thanks to a supportive label and some immaculate product.

The entertainment began with some video excerpts from the IKON catalogue. From the Birthday Party's *Pleasure Heads Must Burn* came an intense, dynamic *Junkyard*. New Order's *Taras Shevchenko* contributed *Chosen Time* (if my memory serves), alongside the clip for *Love Will Tear Us Apart*, some A Certain Ratio, and a rather pale and emaciated (so what's new?) Mark E. Smith, sinking slowly into his lounge as the interview wore on.

The first local contribution of the night came courtesy of BUILT IN GHOSTS, a warped and warping look at television. The short video was made entirely on domestic equipment, and I couldn't help but think that someone out there must have a lot of free time to want to put the hours and care into such a project. It segued images from the last three decades into what seemed like little more than a collection of flash frames, but had a compound effect far greater than that of the individual elements. The highlight was a cleverly-edited sequence that made Ross Symonds appear to achieve orgasm via a Max Headroom stutter.

***CRUSH KILL DESTROY*, another short video, followed, lowering the pace but heightening the intensity. Revolving around that classic mantra from *Lost In Space* (for trivia buffs: the android who said it was called Idak), it presented an apocalyptic view of man's violence, war and weaponry, a hellishly amphetamine-driven boat-ride through the Tunnel of Hate. Culminating in a seemingly endless (and perhaps overstated) frenzy of explosive destruction, *Crush Kill Destroy* left a lot of wide eyes.**

But even wider eyes were to become. Having some knowledge of what sort of event was in store, my friends and I had secured front row seats for the visual and aural assault that is SEVERED HEADS. This year's model features the addition of Pete Rivett-Carnac on keyboards, and some pretty impressive digital sampling — courtesy of two recently-acquired samplers, one multi and one single. The enlistment of another Head has freed Tom Ellard from the constraints of constant keyboard work and allowed him to work on his vocals, which now feature prominently in the material.

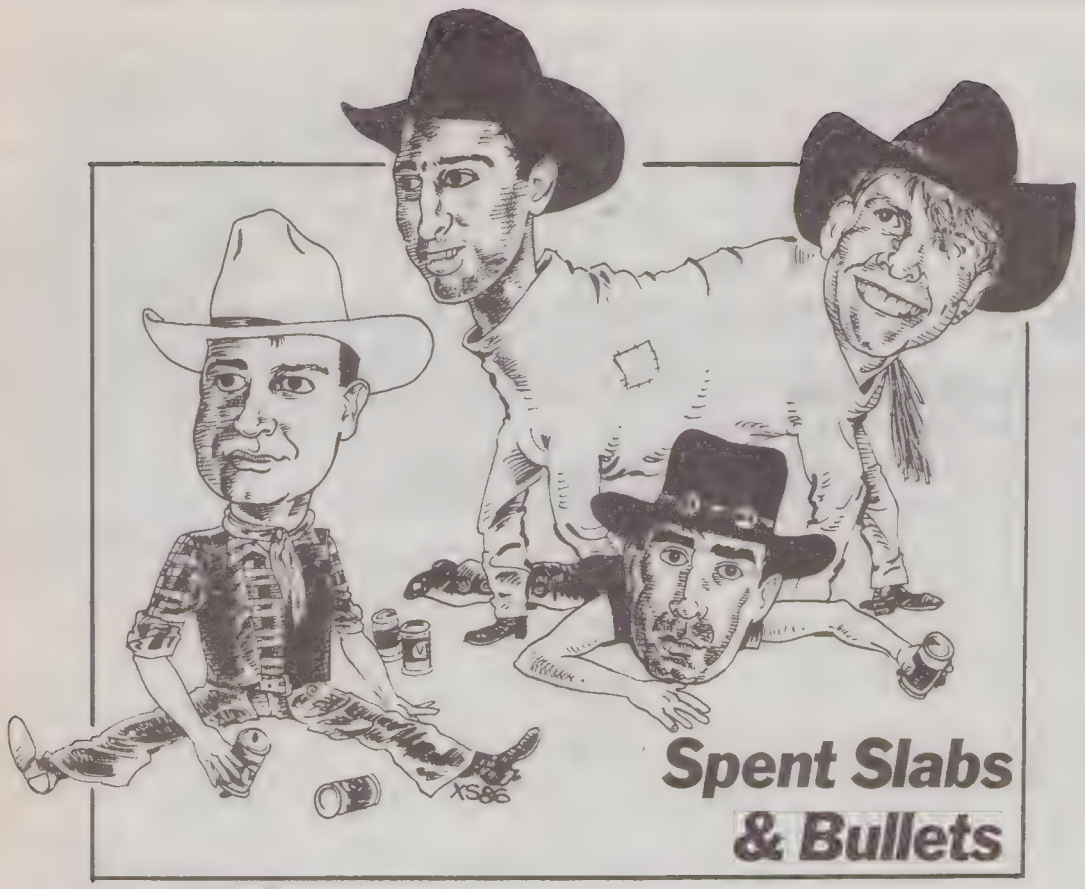
Yes folks! This was the all-singing, all-dancing Severed Heads! The set covered the poppier side of the last few years, kicking off with a revamped *A Million Angels*. Much of the *Stretcher* LP was displayed, including new clips for *Big Blue Is Back* and *Petrol. Halo*, the single that was never released here (but may be later this year) also got a guernsey, alongside three tracks (and clips) from the new album: *Propellor, Twenty Deadly Diseases* and *Harold And Cindy Hospital*. Tom 'sings' on seven of the songs, often self-consciously immersing his quite effective voice in unnecessary effects. And while some people insist on labelling them as an 'experimental' combo, these days you can't overlook the big dance beat of a lot of Heads tunes.

Although the material sees them moving towards a more accessible sound, the elements that combine to make the beauty of the Heads have not changed — the simplicity of the keyboards, the found and created noises, and the exquisite ability to seamlessly combine those raw ingredients into a delectable main course.

At the Chauvel, they were everything they were expected to be: a multi-sensual experience unlike anything purveyed elsewhere, and still one of the most exciting live bands I've ever seen. If I have one complaint, it's that they don't change enough from gig to gig to imbue their music with much of a sense of passion. That's understandable when you realise that so much of their material, both video and audio, is on tape. Still, it tends to restrict appreciation of the band to a largely intellectual plane.

Intellectual or not, the Heads are serious and funny, experimental and accessible, complicated and simple, sound and video, rare and everyday, ugly and beautiful. Ain't *that* juxtaposition...?

JON CASIMIR



JOHNNYS
Highlights Of A Dangerous Life (Mushroom)

There's gonna be a letdown... and it isn't the band's fault.

Anticipation is an insidiously damaging thing. Having waited patiently for the best part of a year to see this album released, slowed up by innumerable mixing and printing problems, my expectations were probably unreasonably high. But then again, the Johnnys are unsurpassably great when they're in gear and cruising through cowpunk county, with an audience stoked on beer and whisky. They are a live phenomenon, a guarantee of a good night out, no matter how badly they play (often, worse is better).

Highlights Of A Dangerous Life kicks off with the well-known *Showdown* (seven of the 11 songs have already seen release), followed by *The Day Marty Robbins Died*, which signals unabashed cowpoke intents with everything bar the galloping coconuts. To my mind, it's not as impassioned a reading as that of the Beasts Of Bourbon, but it ain't bad.

Injun Joe rolls out of the speakers with some of the underlying meanness that seems to be missing in other places on the album, followed by a thrashy *Move It* — presumably a concession to their fun-lovin' drunken reputation, but ultimately comes off more like a harmless King Kurt than the rockin' Cliff Richard original. Side one closes with *Edge Of Death*, which starts promisingly (reminiscent of *Swords Of A Thousand Men*), but somehow fails to really go anywhere...

Side Two opens with a Hoyt Axton song, *Greenback Dollar*, and as the Johnnys themselves would say, bathe me on the altar of truth if it ain't bitchin'. *Bleeding Heart* then shows they can break out of the cliched macho cowboy mode and deliver a love song of requisite sweetness and charm...

From here on, it's a four-song ride to a raucous crescendo through *Way Of The West, Deadmen From Boot Hill, Slip Slap Fishin'* and *Mountain Man*. All of these songs stem from the early period Johnnys, with Roddy Radalj dully allotted writing credits. As a statement of identity, they show that these boys have seen all the old movies, and though the lyrics border more on satyrical than satirical, you've got to love 'em for it.

Highlights Of A Dangerous Life has its moments (though I'm more than a little unsure of the treatment of *Mountain Man*) of joy, and its moments of sorrow. More like a greatest hits compilation than a debut LP, it stands as an archival piece of vinyl. Trouble is, I really expected greatness from them. They display it live, but seem slightly restrained on this outing. Like there's too many sheriffs and not enough train robbers frozen in time. Maybe I oughta be drunk or somethin'...

JON CASMIR

THE CUCKOOS
Sticks And Stones (Survival)
THE ODOLITES
Persistence Of Memory (Rampant)
PSYCHOTIC TURNBUCKLES
Destroy Dull City (Rattlesnake)

Three different moves in the pop game — or rather, three different blows to the body. The Odolites aim for the heart, Psycho-Buckles leap for the jugular and the Cuckoos grab at the wallet. There are also varied manifestoes at play here: fun, serious fun, and no fun. Working back, we start with the Cuckoos.

Of all these mini-albums, theirs runs the longest — though by far the shortest in terms of character and quality. Like their eponymous counterparts in ornithology, they lay eggs (in the nests of others). And it's evident from the seven hatchlings of *Sticks And Stones* that they're well into the corporate crawl of most of the mainstream jive. Fair enough, and compliments for the reasonably lavish across-the-board sound, but for all the perfunctory professionalsim, these birdbrains lack imagination in the playing area and skill at the writing desk. They're a flock of dinosaurs just a few years short of fossilisation.

Tasmania's Odolites, on the other hand, don't seem too concerned about the conventions of major radio. Unlike the pompous sweep of the Cuckoos or the contrived wackiness of the Psycho's, Odolites' music demands a degree of involvement on the listener's part in order to reap rewards. They perform a collision of warmth and astringency which loosely echoes the tone and effect of late-70s combo, Television. Quiet thrills, but the kind that last. *Persistence Of Memory* is clenched-fist tension and loping feels, a rain of spiralling and splintering notes fuelled by basic though effective arrangements. Its scraped and scratched rhythms may be a little light in the area of produciton immediacy, but a balance of stoic intensity and melancholic madcap lyricism gradually grips the attention.

From chartland careerism through ice-cool surrealism to a crunching chainsaw massacre: apparently some people think Sydney's Psychotic Turnbuckles are Radio Birdman in disguise, while others suspect they're the Hoodoo Gurus in drag. They're an anonymous entity, a kind of hard-metal Residents — a quintet buried in blinding shades and volcanic floor mop wigs, trussed up in paisley, polka-dot and zebra-striped garishness, and hiding behind amusing appellations and dubious aptitudes. Here's the credit list: the Grand Wizard, guitar and hypnotherapist; El Sicodelico, guitar and flipouts; the Creep, bass and womanising; Jesse the Destroyer, vocals and foreign objects; and the Spoiler, drums and spoiling.

Undeniably, this projected facade is fun in the flesh, whereby the element of psychotic parody comes into its own in showers of stroboscopic sweat and burning speakers. But on record, it's appalling. *Destroy Dull City* is mere corrosive thrashing and abrasive rawk noise. If it's intended as satire, then it's missing the mark as it comes closer to the brat-rants of your actual skull decorated garages than it does to the piss-taking of *Spinal Tap*. Small wonder they're rapt in all things incognito. Ex Radio Birdperson Rob Younger produced this racket — no doubt fuel for some folks' fantasies of identity — and has provided a pounding punch that's the only real laugh of the record. Once heard is more than enough, however.

MAN FRIDAY
Man Friday (Man Friday)

In which the mysterious print of the Bigfoot becomes a tribe of nine, plus three on the guest list. Man Friday are from Melbourne and mould a sound that's bold, brassy and percussive, as well as very vocal. Their cooking pot, however, contains no explorers. Instead, there's a basic stock of various black influences: a ragout of rough old soul, smooth new soul, reggae, African and Latin quarters.

Well produced, well-intentioned, a good simmering brew — but the *tunes* are underdone. Message songs need stronger melodies to be appetising.

STEVEN CADBURY

THE SCREAMING TRIBESMEN

TOP OF THE TOWN

AUGUST
THU 28 Ferny Grove Tavern, Qld
FRI 29 "Rock Arena", Mansfield Tavern, Qld
SAT 30 Jet Club, Qld
SUN 31 Stewart's, Alexandra Headland, Qld

SEPTEMBER
WED 3 Hills Inn, Sydney
THU 4 Mosman Hotel, Sydney
FRI 5 "Promises", Sylvania Hotel, Sydney
SAT 6 Kardomah Cafe, Sydney
SUN 7 Manuka Football Club, Canberra
MON 8-SUN 14 Ki-Konga
TUES 16 Hotel Manly
WED 17 Sydney University (Lunchtime)
THU 18 Tivoli — "Rattlesnake Records Night" with Psychotic Turnbuckles & guests
FRI 19 Macquarie University
TUE 23-SUN 23 Melbourne

Mini Album "Top Of The Town" out on Rattlesnake Records

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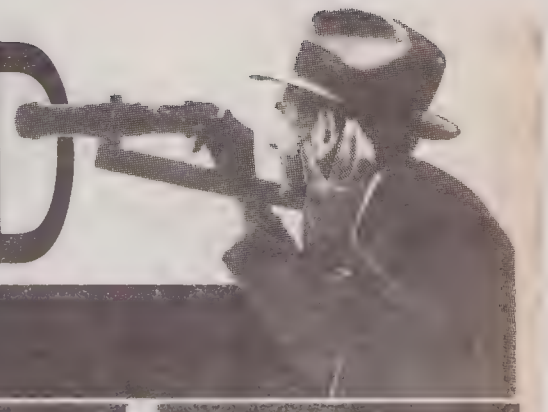

RECORDS • LIVE ACTS

(Pic: Ian Greene)

WILKO JOHNSON/DUTCH TILDERS
(Tivoli, Sydney)

DUTCH TILDERS is a veteran Australian bluesman, and an old pro, so he probably wasn't too fazed by the near-deserted venue. With his bright, ringy guitar style, he exuded a rather incongruous chirpiness — both for the genre and the situation. Only *You Gotta Lose* carried any air of ominousness, and *St. James' Infirmary* was inexplicably transported to the slightly more salubrious climes of *'old Joe's bar-room'*. His centrepiece, *Diddy Wah Diddy* also appeared in revamped form as *Move To Kansas City*. But for the most part, with sturdy versions of classics like Willie Dixon's *Built For Comfort*, it was a tight and likeable performance — with heart (and fingers) in the right place.

It was pleasing, though unsurprising, to see WILKO JOHNSON's trademark idiosyncrasies intact — the all-black garb, the mock-gormless stare and the staccato strut, as distinctive in its way as Chuck Berry's duckwalk. Unfortunately, the lack of full-blown accompanying gusto made his machinegun-miming seem contrived — like a child playing wars. It always *had* been, of course — you just never noticed.

There were moments of excitement and spontaneity, however. *Ice On The Motorway* was stark, desperate British blues, a reminder of the historical pub rock/punk connection. Dr. Feelgood's *Don't Let Your Daddy Know* was radically altered and extended, though marred by the dreaded guitar-behind-the-head routine. And *Back In The Night*, another Feelgoods gem, worked resoundingly because it was *intended* to be relaxed.

For the most part, the accent was on simple love and adventure stories, with pirates a recurring theme — perhaps a nod to Wilko's hero and stylistic inspiration, the Pirates' Mick Green. The one critical error was a cover of *Highway 61 Revisited* (Johnny Winter made the same mistake). Dylan lyrics are too important to be played down in favour of riff accentuation —except by Dylan!

Wilko Johnson's track-record is illustrious: pioneering work with the early Feelgoods, an unlikely but successful partnership with Ian Dury (bassist Norman Watt-Roy is another ex-Blockhead), the r'n'b raunch of the Solid Senders, and for that matter the current power trio. Having seen him in all these incarnations, I know just how enthralling his show can be. This was the first gig of the tour, and the odds are heavily on Wilko's restraint going the way of his jetlag.

MARK DEMETRIUS

THE FLAMING MUSSOLINIS
Watching The Film
(CBS)

There are no neo-fascist connotations here. In fact, for the most part, the Flaming Mussolinis are flaming groovy. A brief listen to *Watching The Film* and it's easy to bag them as competent, sometimes sophisticated, but unremarkable passion-pop. Subsequent listens, however, quickly dispel that notion and it becomes evident that the Mussolinis are not only sharp observers of the world around them, but they have a knack of writing about those situations in a fresh, passionate and (lyrically) non-cliched fashion.

Where, say, the Alarm — and there are certain comparisons to be drawn — are tediously cloying in their social banner-waving, the Mussolinis take a more subtle approach and write an anti-nuclear song (*Swallow Glass*) which actually invites you to consider the situation, rather than ramming an opinion down your throat. In the meantime you get to listen to a fine song. The same applies to the anti-drug sentiments of *Dangerous Persuasion*, while *A Long Way to Fall*, with its disgustingly strong chorus, tells of the pressures of a corporate magnate.

The voice of Sav is full of strident passion. The arrangements are simple but effective and are set off by subtle embellishments such as Jeff Fogarty's impeccable sax playing. There are but two tracks which fall short: *Horror Show* and *Landslide* simply lack the vibrancy and ingenuity which characterise the rest of this excellent album. Viva the Mussolinis!

GRANT CALTON

RY COODER
Why Don't You Try Me Tonight?
(WEA)

Having your licks stolen by Keith Richards is a great way to start a career, and playing with Captain Beefheart could've guaranteed permanent anonymity. But since his sinister slide work on Jack Nitzsche's score for *Performance* and early albums on which he appeared to be some sort of blues purist — eccentric but out of time — Ry Cooder has quietly invented his own idiom, exchanging the record rack for the silver screen. His last album of new songs was the disappointing *The Slide Area* in 1981; since then he's concentrated on film scores.

The hybrid style that Cooder has developed is a blend of blues, r'n'b, gospel, cajun, Tex-Mex, reggae, even Hawaiian: a Hollywood stew of all that goes into American music. The only problem with this album is that it's only shot from a couple of angles, concentrating mainly on the middle-of-the-road r'n'b tunes — the style of *Bop 'Til You Drop*. Side Two is devoted to tracks from that album and from the similarly flavoured *Borderline*, while Side One contains the most accessible tracks from the first four albums. *Jazz* and *Showtime* remain unrepresented — a pity, I think, because *The Pearls* or *Swine* would have been contenders, and *Showtime's* version of *Dark End Of The Street* is more interesting and passionate than the studio one. Little of the film music appears (except *Available Space*, which Jack Nicholson used in *Goin' South*).

He'll Have To Go, the most despised country tune since *I Love You Because*, is here rendered highly palatable by the swirling sax and accordion lines; and the Mills Brothers' *Smack Dab In The Middle* is a perfect example of Cooder's musicology at work — blues guitar and mandolin, resonant black harmonies straight out of church and Jim Keltner's slap-my-fish New Orleans-style drumming. Keltner is a delight throughout, brilliantly unpredictable and funky. The vocal backings are gritty and wailing, whilst Cooder's singing is honest and unpretentious. The arrangements are careful and the guitar is elegant.

This album is excellent. The highlights for me are *Hollywood, Tattler* and *Try Me*. If it's biased towards the commercial, fair enough — the audience who go for the more esoteric Cooder probably have that weird shit anyway.

VICTOR PRESS

RY COODER
Blue City — Soundtrack
Crossroads — Soundtrack
(WEA)

When is a soundtrack not merely a soundtrack? When it's Ry Cooder's latest album, that's when. Full of the shimmering bottleneck scrape that lent such atmosphere to *Paris, Texas* and propelled by the loping southern funk of the best of his earlier work, both these albums are worthwhile purchases for the avid blues fan and Cooder collector alike. They exist as more than just adjuncts to the movies, neither of which has yet been sighted here. Listen...

For those who came in late, Ry Cooder, with people like J.J. Cale and the late lamented Little Feat, defined the economical country-based guitar style adopted by Eric Clapton in the early 70s and lately staked out as Mark Knopfler's personal property. Cooder also prefigured the recent interest in latino music as well as reinterpreting traditional blues in a (pardon me) wry, worldweary yet romantic voice entirely appropriate to our times. From Peter Fonda's underrated *The Hired Hand* through Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas* up to these two films, the 'western' will never sound the same again.

Not that *Blue City* or *Crossroads* appear to be westerns in the true sense. It's just that it's hard to separate America's own vision of itself from the dusty prairie sounds that Cooder's laconic muse evokes. Both albums have a muscular rhythm section (including longtime associate, the sublime drummer Jim Keltner) at their heart, but whereas *Blue City* boasts string arrangements, synthesisers by Toto's David Paich and Steve Porcaro and organ by the Heartbreakers' Benmont Tench, the Cooder-produced *Crossroads* is downhome blues, featuring Sonny Terry's harmonica (his last recording) and the gospel vocals of Bobby King, Terry Evans and Willie Green Jr. Indeed, the title track is the old Robert Johnson blues, here reworked as radically as the celebrated Cream version but decidedly bluer, less bombastic and downright *funkier* (in the real sense of that much maligned word). There's a spare, dark rendition of *Down In Mississippi*, written by another dead bluesman, J.B. Lenoir, and a brace of country/blues and gospel arrangements, from full band to tack piano and a simple guitar-and-harmonica on the closing track, *Walkin' Away Blues*.

Blue City is another bowl of gumbo entirely, lighter on the chili but heavy on the sour cream. Gone are the untutored voices, the rustic instrumentations, the loose shuffles and New Orleans oompah rhythms that wander crazily across the metre. Instead you've got downtown Hollywood studio polish that even veers dangerously close to Knopfler's wallpaper soundtrack work in *Billy And Annie*. On the other hand, you've got your big city strut (*Blue City Down*), loads of funky instrumental pieces and a rich blend of unlikely juxtapositions — steel drums, harp (!), percussion, pseudo-mandolin and "bowed piano" (which sounds as eerie as you'd expect). Cooder himself revisits the old C&W ballad *Don't Take Your Guns To Town*, and Johnny Cash never sounded so good. His guitar dominates the record in all its moods, from steely twangin' Duane Eddy Stratocaster and screaming slide to chiming, latin-influenced acoustic.

Blue City is much more of a soundtrack than *Crossroads*, but beneath the surface glitz it's none the worse for that. If the movies are half as good, don't miss 'em. Meanwhile, this is vintage Cooder — and it's been a good year.

CHRIS STAFFORD

LIVE SEX
An Expression Of Faith
GREETING No 4
Civilised To Death
(Very Mouth)

Silly names for groups, Part 50,000. A new label and bands from the UK; some bad news and some not so bad news. Let's start with a turn for the worst.

Calling a combo **Live Sex** is as perverse as say.... Free Booze or Guaranteed Drug Abuse. An amusing enough moniker, though of course having *nothing* to do with lasciviousness. It's a cheap drawcard that lifts a lock on a world of senile dementia.

The tinkerings with guitar, synths and drum machines, etc are occasionally interesting enough, but severely let down by the trio's copious swallowing of dictionaries. There's evidence of confused and shredded regurgitation rather than digestion of meaning (the mistake being that it *thinks* it has lots). Included is a vain and absurd little manifesto attempting to pass as titillating humour, plus a mind-numbing shortlist of quotes from their lyrical gibberish. These people are probably acid casualties. The closest they come to their name is that they are live wankers.

Meanwhile, **Greeting NO 4** present a superior four-track mini-LP. They're a very young quartet (only a few years out of school, apparently) and unlike their elder labelmates — who must surely be a supreme embarrassment — they purvey tunes, skills, arrangements, dynamics and variety. Though it's early days, they've already grasped subtlety and tension in their music. *Train* is infectiously melodic and taken at a fair clip, *Flavour* wanders in and out of tonal atmospherics without sacrificing continuity, *Pig* is a shimmering, poppy animal and *Tune In* is their most adventuous, with the mildest of funk borrowings and loads of guest(?) sax wail. The sound's a little airy, the voice a touch choirboyish, though pleasant adjustment in solidified within a few listens. Here at least is sparkling activity and the realisation of actual ideas.

STEVEN CADBURY

The BUDGET Singles

7"

Another year, another horror budget: and welcome to the last 7-inch singles roundup. Just like Treasurer Keating, we've struck on some better ideas — in future, we'll be reviewing singles in their video context. That is, how they front up on both fronts. Precedence will be given to local product, and we'll make a point of reviewing debut singles to that end. As for you dancefloor dervishes, never fear: CRAIG N. PEARCE will continue to beat the 12-inch drum, and this issue he grabs the lion's share of recent releases to make up for last issue's omissions. Meanwhile, STEVEN CADBURY waves farewell with a stroke of his pen to the 7-inchers as we knew them...

THE HEADHUNTERS
I Believe In Love (Powderworks)
Written by Fabulous Thunderbird Kim Wilson, this is rollin' and tumblin' nut-down-and-boogie stuff. Rampant harp and a fair noise — well done, but still tough.

STATUS QUO
Rollin' Home (Vertigo)
Honestly, I thought (and had fervently hoped) they'd split up. Boogie boredom au-no-go, and a bland, lightweight production from Dave Edmunds.

MICHAEL McDONALD
Sweet Freedom (MCA)
Theme from a movie called *Running Scared*, and that's how it's got me. Good singer and sound etc, but this relentless film-flam is becoming a plague of horrific proportions.

MONDO ROCK
Rule Of Threes (Polydor)
Professional, precise, aimed at the top of the planet's charts. Bonebrained backbeat, oft cudgelled choruses, AOR sensibilities; the rules of mainstream FM.

DAVID SYLVIAN
Taking The Veil (Virgin)
Single of the bunch. Beatific sound and imagery, with a guest list including Robert Fripp and Bill Nelson's distinctive guitars, and the sharp drums of Steve Jansen. Hypnotic and soaring, a *warm* sound with ice-cool melodic pincers. Hopefully an album follows...

JOHN COUGAR MELLENCAMP
Rumbleseat (Mercury)
Well played contemporary boogaloo listing an amusing procession of paranoid behaviour. An infectious song, with a flipside that features a version of Godfunker of Soul James Brown's shimmering *Cold Sweat*. A tough one to tackle, but it's spat out with energetic conviction. An uncredited woman co-sings it spiritedly and the band burn with ease.

THE SPLIFFS
You Know What They'll Say (Independent)
Power pop from Townsville in the north of Queensland, with neat harmonies and fine playing from this quartet. Two songs on the flip — *Thanx To You* and *I Know A Girl*. All are very much steeped in the 60s, but kicked out with a display of energy and a sense of fun. And despite the silly moniker, one detects no evidence of Rastafarianism.

JEFFREY OSBORNE
You Should Be Mine (A&M)
And it states in parentheses: *The Woo Woo Song*. Yes, Jeffrey goes 'woo woo woo' a lot in the choruses. It's polite mid-tempo schmaltz, well-sung, but awfully dull.

MARK EDWARDS
Only A Love (WEA)
Good sound, an engaging tone or two, but a cliched song. Indifference in the vocal department too.

RED GUITARS
America And Me (Virgin)
English group on a relentless, counter-melodic guitar shuffle, featuring fun lyrics about wanting to be King John leading the big country along the freedom trail and other Hollywood imagery. Flipside ballad, *Marianne* weaves well with instrumental integration.

HOLLYWOOD BEYOND
What's The Colour Of Money? (WEA)
Despite the yankee band name, HB is actually a person called Mark Rogers on keyboards and vocals plus co-composition with one Jamie B. Rose. Ex Rip Rig And Panic merchant Bruce Smith drums, and Matt Becker slashes and picks (on the A-side). A stomping sea-shanty feel, and apparently the green stuff is red. Flip *Hollywood Beyond* is Roger plus programming and pop photographer Cindy Palmano on backing vocals. Its loping gait and broken arrangement are smoothly haunting. B-side of the bunch, and an appetising debut.

THE SUNDOGS
Bang Bang Johnny (Powderworks)
Produced by Rob Hirst of the OIIIIIIILLLLS, who's done a nice job with the dynamics, *Bang Bang Johnny* is straight-ahead rollicking pop with a firm acoustic strum. Flipside *Addiction* is even better — a restrained feedback hook sifts through the stomp and takes over by its conclusion.

THRASHING DOVES
Matchstick Flotilla (A&M)
Mildly T. Rexian boogaloo featuring deep bass, dippy strings, the quiet bit in the middle and off they go again. Not bad.

TOMMY KEENE
Listen To Me (Geffen)
Don't! You'll regret it. Then again, if you're Keene on corporate chime and clipped guitar with lashings of bland, simpering vocals... by all means!

THE TECHNICIANS
Soldier Of Fortune (Powderworks)
Not the JPY hit. No! Surprisingly, that was better than this binketty-bonk business. From Queensland, an exception to the current power pop rule.

DWIGHT YOAKAM
Honky Tonk Man (Reprise)
Rockin', rompin' C&W. The best vocal hiccup in eons. Pickin', tuneful, fiddlin' and fun.

TANGO BRAVO
Blood Is The Colour (Mushroom)
Chart fodder. Very Christie Allen revisited.

FLOY JOY
Friday Night (Virgin)
Spineless Anglo funk fare: well-structured, though instantly forgettable.

NU SHOOZ
Point Of No Return (Atlantic)
This is more like it: some bite in the beat. Punchy, cinematic American funk.

DAVID STEWART & BARBARA GASKIN
The Locomotion (Stiff)
Not Annie's musical other half in yet another fit of dalliance; no, this pair have done several pleasant covers of pop hits over the years. Here's one more — Little Eva's express groove with all the steam sucked out, but powered by grace and affection.

J.A.M. '86
We've Got The Love (Arista)
Stands for Jersey Artists for Mankind and features a pile of people from New Jersey USA. Springsteen plucks a snatch of guitar, Nils Lofgren and Southside Johnny are among the many voices, Clarence Clemons honks a bit of horn. Dozens of folk dabble in a heartfelt gesture towards children's charities, but why must most fund-raising discs sound so gratingly bland?

CHARLIE SEXTON
Hold Me (MCA)
A cover of the ancient P.J. Proby thing, and a spirited interpretation it is too — sixties swagger refreshingly redone rather than drowned in modernist machinations.

SCRIBBLE
Don't Give Your Heart Away (Regular)
Strong ballad from the mistress of melt-in-the-mouth pop. Produced, played on and vocally backed by Iva Davies, penned by Johanna (Scribble) Pigott and Todd Hunter — superb job all round.

MANIKINS
What Are You On? (CBS)
Actually the question should be redirected toward these performers. A ricketty-tinkling two-step shuffle that's half Muppets, half rock group. Sort of Pavlov's Dog in a good mood.

ROGER DALTREY
The Pride You Hide (10)
The less said about the A-side... Bonus single is two live tracks, including cover lure: 'First ever live recording of *Pictures Of Lily*'. Good band on a good song for a change, a mildly surprising, slight cracker of a reading, though missing Pete's dangerous fury.

PRINCE & THE REVOLUTION
Anotherloverholenyohead/Girls And Boys (Paisley Park)
Devastating double-A funky pop. Both songs taken from the last album, and two of its finest examples. Rabid narcissism this may well be, but not much else on this page gets the stomach fluttering or the body to bop.

David Sylvian (Pic: LFI)

12"

GWEN GUTHRIE
Ain't Nothin' Goin' On But The Rent (Polydor Import)
MELBA MOORE
Love The One I'm With (Capitol Import)
Two ladies who've been around for a not inconsiderable period of time here prove why they're still cool and still grooving. Gwen Guthrie's song is in the vanguard of this new thang known as the 'Garage' sound, whereby in-house DJ at New York's famed Paradise Garage, Larry Levan, adjusts the dials and levels to force out the funk in a spare, sweaty style heavily appreciated by the club's — and now the world's — hard-at-it dancing crew.

Melba Moore, aided here by big name Kashif, turns out one of her juicy, sweet soul songs that grapples with rhythms and melodies like they're touchy lovers. The single's flip, *Don't Go Away*, is a serene coupling of imploring hope and heady despair, good enough for a release in its own right. Beautiful.

THE REAL ROXANNE WITH HITMAN HOWIE TEE
Bang Zoom Let's Go-Go! (Select Import)
OSIRIS
War On The Bullshit (Baaaad Import)
Hardest of the hard meets the sweetest meat on the beat. Sultry, acid-tongued Roxanne (The Real!) alternates between tuff rappin' epithets and almost blue Hawaiian serenades (in the Full Force family tradition, of which Rox and Howie are part). The Hitman sets it all in gold with some mighty mixing, and behind that is a Go-Go beat worthy of D.C. itself. Raunchy loins and Bugs Bunny give it to ya!

War On The Bullshit, currently too hip to even contemplate arguing with, is being played worldwide on a regular basis even as we speak. Osiris burn with a dark muted anger which roars sublimely over a rhythm track of unspeakable compulsion. The percussion is upfront but still doesn't stamp its declamatory feet all over you. Subtle but murderous!

BLUE MODERNE
Through The Night (Roll Import)
ATLANTIC STARR
In The Heat Of Passion (A&M Import)
HANSON AND DAVIS
I'll Take You On (Fresh Import)
No dancefloor would be complete without all three of these songs high up on the playlist. Blue Moderne bring a wonderful air of eager emancipation to their tune, which is primarily couched in some luscious soul vocals and a rhythm line joyous in its bouncy, fragile upswing.

In The Heat Of Passion is yet another excellent cut off the recently locally released *As The Band Turns* LP for Atlantic Starr. Though the album was initially released over a year ago, the new single illustrates that the music's quality and steamy lasciviousness has not faded with time or constant re-acquaintance.

I'll Take You On by Hanson and Davis is an attractive little jiggler in the mould of mid-70s disco, but with a greater soul quotient and a more strung-out, dignified beat. Good to go with!

THE FOUR TOPS
Hot Nights (Motown Import)
B B & Q BAND
I'm A Dreamer (WEA Import)
Off their soon-to-be-released new LP, the Four Tops demonstrate once again what worthy warriors they are when it comes to displaying humanity, sexuality and what a groove actually means. Though their dance steps are difficult to divine through this piece of vinyl, the depth of emotion apparent in *Hot Nights* is more than sufficient to get me up and boogieing — happy in the knowledge that 'class' is one word destined never to be divorced from the Tops' reputation.

The BB&Q Band have been consistent performers in black music for a while now. *I'm A Dreamer*, though adhering reasonably safely to their proven ability to get people moving, is still full of delightful touches and keen melodies.

MACATTACK
The Art of Drums (Baaad Import)
AYRE RAYDE
SocK It To Me (Cherry Red Import)
Okay folks, let's Go-Go! Chocolate City must be having a hot one this summer, as these two tracks crank out mystifying, mind-blowing boogie patterns with all the determination of a charging rhino. Say what! Though losing out to a backlash lately, courtesy of ignorance and critical pre-meditation as to what certain wankers think Go-Go *should* be, here is the real McCoy going ga ga.

CARGO
Don't Stop Your Love (WEA Import)
GAVIN CHRISTOPHER
One Step Closer (Capitol Import)
Don't Stop Your Love is a thrilling, high-reaching soul song featuring some wondrous piano dropped in halfway through, only to be usurped by a heavenly chorus of massed female vocals. They back up a male lead which combines humility and passion over a garrulous backbeat.

Christopher incorporates some interesting innovations in his new single, an ode to resisting depression which is done no harm at all by the guy's distinctive vocal qualities. It exudes class and confidence whilst stopping short of sounding smug. Soul in the old style (uplifting and graceful) harnessed to a big, bounding backbeat: good news for fans of fine fare.

I'M TALKING
Holy Word (Regular)
Oh Zan! What have you done? Shown the world at last what an irresistible hothouse of sex and fire your voice really is? Well, it's about time credit was given where credit was due. *Holy Word* is the best song off I'm Talking's predictable new LP — it relies on *feel* rather than the rhythm programming tricks the band normally hides behind — and on 12 inches, the mix is punchy, appealing and dramatic.

SIGUE SIGUE SPUTNIK
21st Century Boy (EMI)
PROPAGANDA
Wishful Thinking (Festival)
SSS are dolts — their music is entirely unconvincing on any level whatsoever (they can't even dig up a new computer-programmed rhythm over which to recite the bland blatherings they call lyrics), and I really can't see how they'll last beyond the end of this month... They've already all but stiffed in England.

Propaganda aren't much better than the Spuds, either. Their main claim to fame is gimmickry and skilful promotion rather than (he)art or music. *Wishful Thinking* is revamped trickery that their record company, the properly maligned Zang Thumb Bum, makes a speciality out of releasing. (Speaking of which, Frankie's new single is about to be thrust upon all you suckers who actually derive pleasure from this sort of inane crap).

WILLIAM BELL
Pass (Tout Ensemble Import)
JAMES COBBIN & PRIME CUT
Caught In The Middle (Loveboat International Import)
William Bell's followup to the great *Headline News* again places his expertly honed real soul growl at the front of a finely crafted 'pop' song. Moving the pace up a step or two from *Headline*, the man lets us know *'the time is right for passion'* — and with an invitation as charming as this, there can't be many who'd refuse.

J.C. and Prime Cut carve a bubbling slice of jitterbugging, skating funk out of nowhere and must be hot hot *hot* in the clubs right now. Determined but tasteful, *Caught In The Middle* bounces from pillar to post, heartache to happiness, in a natural and effervescent way. Dig in.

ARCHIE BELL & THE DRELLS
Don't Let Love Get You Down (Portrait Import)
Though Archie Bell's classic *Don't Let Love Get You Down* was originally released to become a smash in 1975, this sparkling new remix is no less poignant now than it was then. Through a seamless gauze curtain of vintage Philly harmonies, Archie Bell breaks through in a calming, golden

Propaganda Then (now deceased)

voice which immediately provokes drama, joy and a pounding kind of feeling in the back of your chest.

Where Will You Go When The Party's Over? and *Soul City Walk* (on the flip) are also excellent songs in the Gamble/Huff, McFadden/Whitehead Philly soul mould. This really is a very happening record and no collection can be complete without it.

STEVIE WINWOOD
Higher Love (Festival)
HOLLYWOOD BEYOND
What's The Colour Of Money? (WEA)
Nice mix on this one, Stevie. The shorter cut is pulled apart and put back together again with a tactile awareness of space and harmony; teasing bliss in the blue-eyed soul vocals, and the percussion is allowed a little more room for sparking hiss and rumble. I do baulk, however, at the song's rather dubiously dumb Phil Collins affectations.

The colour of money is red, according to Hollywood Beyond. The reason for this isn't made especially clear but I assume it's because capitalism spills workers' blood in order to propagate the profit factor. Great. And the song — percussive, muscular and rather catchy at that — is already doing a good job in England of acquainting the band a little more closely with the evils and delights of (more) money.

NU SHOOZ
Point Of No Return (WEA)
THE ART OF NOISE
Paranoimia (Festival)
It would have been hard to top the popular perfection of *I Can't Wait*, and Nu Shooz have obviously found the going difficult. That said, *Point Of No Return* isn't a bad attempt at livening up the airwaves, not least because of the obviousness of its interior mechanics. The Art of Noise, on the other hand, even with the aid of bathing beauty Max Headroom, prove once more what a load of poncey jerks they really are.

PETE WYLIE
Sinful (Virgin)
RED GUITARS
America And Me (Virgin)
Aging rocker Pete Wylie has evidently had a life crammed with guilt. Because that's what he unfailingly documents on each of his studiously even records. *Sinful* has its moments of glory — some harmony, some juicy electronic jazz-ups — but Wylie's vocal is so ugly and dreary the song soon wears out its welcome.

Red Guitars roar like mice, putting this here and that there, not knowing whether to get frantic or ordered. This song is bloodless crud with an appalling John Lydon-ish vocal.

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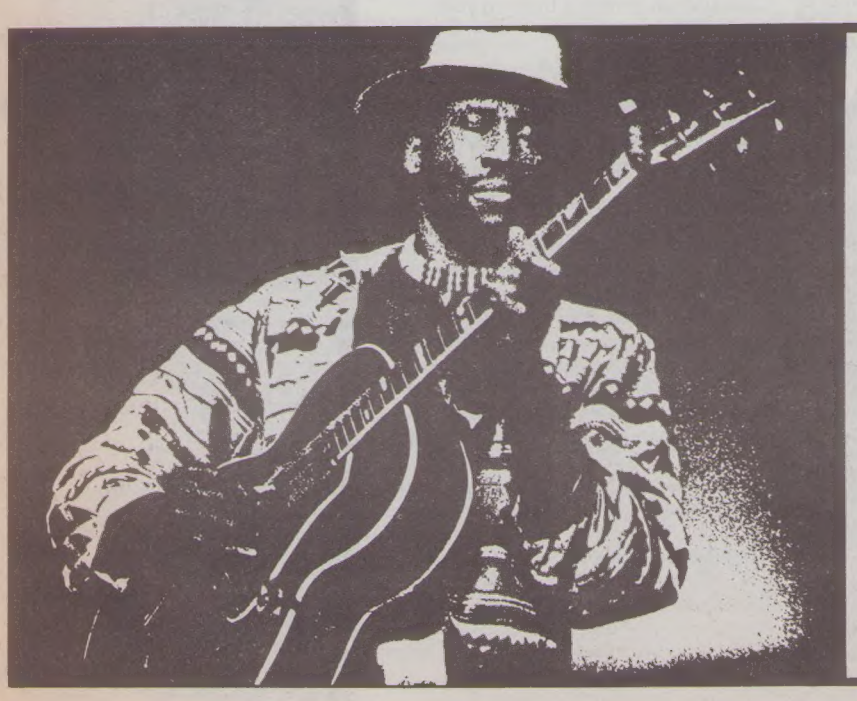

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SEEN AND HEARD

(Pic: Paul Canty/LFI)

CHIC
Extended Play (WEA)

At the turn of the 80s, Chic's carefree riff seemed ironical, the deadpan vocals witty. Now that Prince's brand of stripped-down eccentric funk has left a hole in our heads, Chic sound like a left-over dacquiri. The vocals, always a problem, are lame and contrived, the lyrics stilted, the scansion awkward... but the rhythm still counts. Nile Rodgers' rhythm guitar is a classic of post-James Brown strumming, and Bernard Edwards' stroppy bass and Tony Thompson's solid-centre drums are the best in disco. Play it loud and dance, and you won't notice the coconut-ice strings or dribbly solos.

This EP contains their greatest dance hits. The wonderful riff of *Good Times* started a whole new thing. *Hanging* is another piece of fluff in the navel of the privileged (and a good James Brown horn arrangement). *Le Freak* is ultimate dance-floor and *Dance Dance Dance* has the mortal catchphrase *'yowzah yowzah yowzah'*. Now you know which is which. Some things date quickly. Excuse me, I feel the Bump coming on...

ERNIE COLE

THE BAMBOOS
Rarer Than Rocking Horse Shit
(Independent Cassette)

Once upon a time in a faraway western state there was a place called Cover City. Then it changed. Millions — well, quite a few bands were brought forth, and a new style of music was seen in the land. Amongst the few were the Bamboos, and this is their cassette.

The Bamboos are brilliant. No synths — just 'real' instruments, including the wonderful voice of Craig Hallsworth.

The Yellow Side of the cassette consists of old songs, including favourites like *Strange Territory*, *Law Of A Gun* with its blazing guitar and handsome harmonies and the highlight, *Drunk Highway*. How to describe it — country thrash? It's a mixture of feedback geetar, early Hoodoos drumming, country harmonies... how about psycho-country?

The White Side is newer material: the beautiful ballad *Partner*, the noisy cacophony of *Snuff* and the subtle acoustic guitar of the stirring *Virginia*. The grooviest of the bunch has to be *Dead Girl*, though it's too much fun to be taken seriously.

Not so the Bamboos, who have transformed country to suit themselves and in the process proved once more that there's intelligent life in Perth. Truly a band that's rarer than rocking horse shit, and twice as rocking.

And yet another Perth band named after flora. Must be the desert...

THE WILTED PETAL

JANET JACKSON
Control
(A & M)

Michael in drag?

No, it's pre-coiff Janet

Are you a slave to the rhythm? Do you think a call to the dancefloor is worth more than a strong melody or some genuine emotion? Do vocals that pout and heavy-breathe mechanically (but *perfectly* in time) appeal to you? Is technology more important than talent?

If you answered yes to any or all of the above questions, you should probably buy *Control*. It sounds big and modern, and comes complete with weepy ballads (*Let's Wait Awhile*, *Funny How Time Flies*) and hit singles of questionable merit (*Nasty*, *What Have You Done For Me Lately?*). Admittedly, *What Have You...* is a gloriously inane groove that won't let go, but the rest of the record sounds like lots of money was spent emulating Prince. This is especially true of Janet's vocals, the little ad-libs, the harmonies, the panting, with even the melodies proclaiming a virtual infatuation with the purple people-eater's style. Though Prince wears *his* influences on his sleeve, he has displayed his deftness at arranging his soul smorgasbord for mass consumption over and over — but there are no real *songs* on *Control*.

And on top of being so infuriatingly anonymous, the woman insists on causing us to cringe at the most embarrassing spoken interludes I've heard in a long time. For example, the album opens with the title track, Janet intoning deep and meaningfully, almost drowning in a sea of echo... *'This is a story about control — my control. Control of what I say, control of what I do. And this time I'm gonna do it my way.'* It seems as though she actually believes she is creating something better than B-grade chart fodder...

But enough of this drivel. The fact remains that records like *Control* have been made redundant by the likes of YELLo, the Cure, Talking Heads and Hunters & Collectors, all of whom have stressed the point time and again that dance music needn't be devoid of character or intelligence.

JOHN ENCARNACAO

D.C. LEE
Shrine
(CBS)

D. C. Lee came to public attention crooning soulfully in the back-lines of Wham! and the Style Council. However, her debut solo album has no great socio-political manifesto. Cruelty to those small animals known as children gets an harangue on *Still The Children Cry*, but elsewhere Ms D.C. shows herself as a traditional gal.

This is classic pop-funk from the 101-ways-with-mince school of love songs. She drives a modest three-speed funk wagon — medium, more medium and discernibly slower than medium. She drives on standard fuel, but it's a late-model, well-serviced machine; the engine room players are consummate and smooth.

In the first, we get a big pop ballad like *See The Day*, dripping with hyperbolic tympani and strings. Changing up we find ourselves cruising to a neatly syncopated beat with suitable orchestral stabs and finale string washes (as in the re-gendered Hall & Oates song, *He's Gone*). In top gear, from the house of disco D.C. runs the not-so-large gamut from *What About Me (I Too Want You)*, *Hold On (Don't Pass Me By Like This)* to *Shrine (What We Had Was Never Really There)*.

Not just a pretty face, she has written or co-written half the tracks. As always with this style of song, it ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it. She hasn't got a raunchy soul growl or the bluesy power of Alison Moyet, nor the sheer virtuosity of Whitney Houston. Her breathy, chesty voice has the same window-fogging potential as Sade's, but her range allows her to climb a few more octaves and bring some gentle beauty to this temple of pop.

JEREMY COOK

(Pic: SL/LFI)

TRACEY ULLMAN
Forever — The Best Of Tracey Ullman
(Stiff — Import)

OK, so the name doesn't mean too much here. Most folk would only know her from her supporting role as Meryl Streep's buddy in *Plenty*. And yes, most of the tracks are two to four years old. But wait — this is escapism. As James Brown sang centuries ago, *'what everybody's lookin' for today'*...

Ullman is the girl-next-door and more: a fine sting and foil in British TV comedy, a serious thespian talent and a winsome interpreter of pop, past and present. The sound is bright and crisp — big drums, massed vocal harmonies, clear strum and twang. Motown to Spector, the full gamut of forceful melodic pop, whether crying in a souped-up approximation of lurve-lorn angst in the pants or simply *stomping*. She sings with jaded feeling, a brilliant indifference that transcends accurate expression. She tackles anything — from songs from the breathlessly melodic Kirsty MacColl like the soaring *They Don't Know* and the witty *You Broke My Heart In 17 Places* (*'Shepherd's Bush was just one of them'*) to past covers such as Marcie Blaine's *Bobby's Girl*, Doris Day's *Move Over Darling*, the Herd's *I Don't Want Our Loving To Die* and Kim Weston's *Helpless*. Even the ballads are an invite to dance — if you don't mind the occasional stumbling waltz at close quarters — with most of the material at shimmering voltage. This is perfect radio fodder: you can whistle, toe-tap and still keep your eye on the clock.

A Madness song changes gender and becomes *My Guy* — all is a mess of girls-talk, street vignettes and romantic tragic parody; foot fuel from the over-milked teats of pop. Firm, fine and party time — *Forever*, once more with feeling, is an amazing compilation.

STEVEN CADBURY

STRYPER
Soldiers Under Command
(Big Time)

Just when America's moral majority thought they could peg down heavy metal as the demonic, sadistic, chauvinistic juggernaut out to corrupt the fragile innocence of the world's youth, along comes this bunch of holy rollers called Stryper. Not only do these guys advocate Christian morality, they throw bibles into the audience for Christ's sake!!

They've taken literally the biblical cliche of a battle between good and evil and thrill to the opportunity of fighting the good fight. But they haven't exactly stuck with the outmoded weaponry of sword and armour, as the album's cover testifies. No, these boys are into sub-machine guns and mortars — though just how they plan to use them isn't clear. Are they going to take off in their van like the A-Team mowing down the heathens or do they just intend deafening them with metal fatigue?

Certainly Stryper's lyrics pose no threat to the intellect, and it is quite possible to continue bashing your head against a nearby wall without missing anything.

Stryper are sincere in their belief in God's power, and sticking to their principles has so far cost them the chance of a lucrative contract with a major company, who thought they'd be great if they "dropped the religion".

The fact that none of them has copped a lightning bolt also seems to indicate that God is not as upset as some American churchmen about the way they've chosen to spread the word. Stryper beef it up with the familiar thunderous undercurrents as perpetrated by Ratt, Motley Crue and Iron Maiden. Subtlety is not allowed a look-in, though let's face it — some of us are so thick that subtlety is about as useful as a glass door on a dressing room.

Strangely, as with many metallurgists, it's the ballads that stay with you after your ears have stopped ringing — but perhaps it's just that they're a brief respite from the aural assault. *Soldiers Under Command* is as good as any other metal albums around at the moment, but I still prefer the local church choir.

RAY FARLEY

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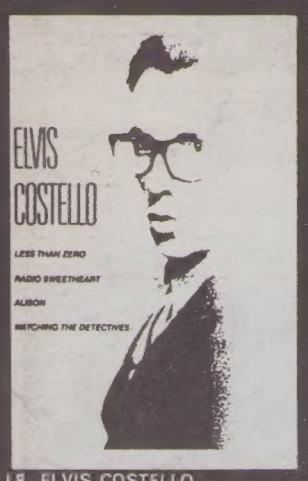

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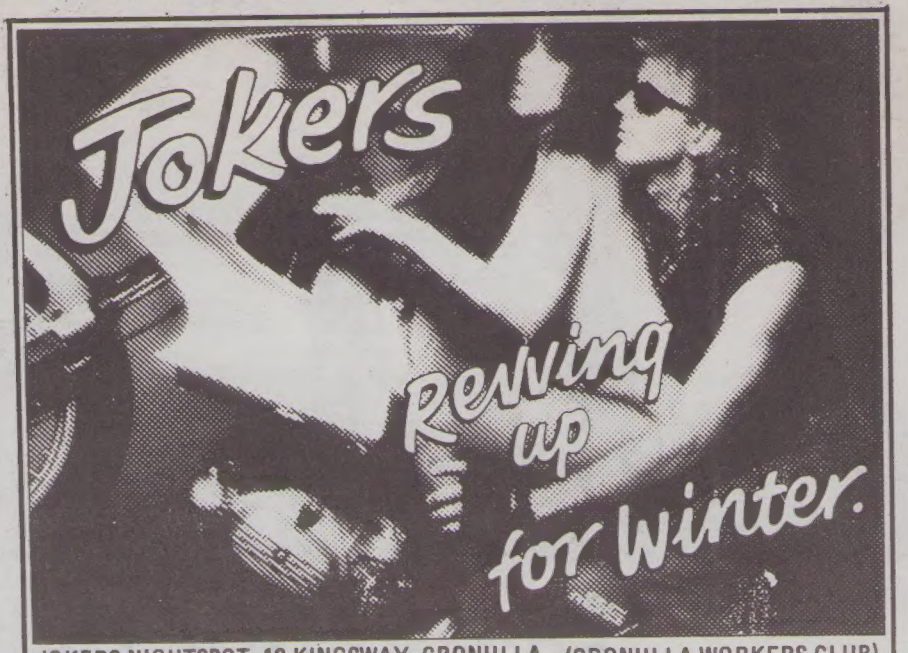

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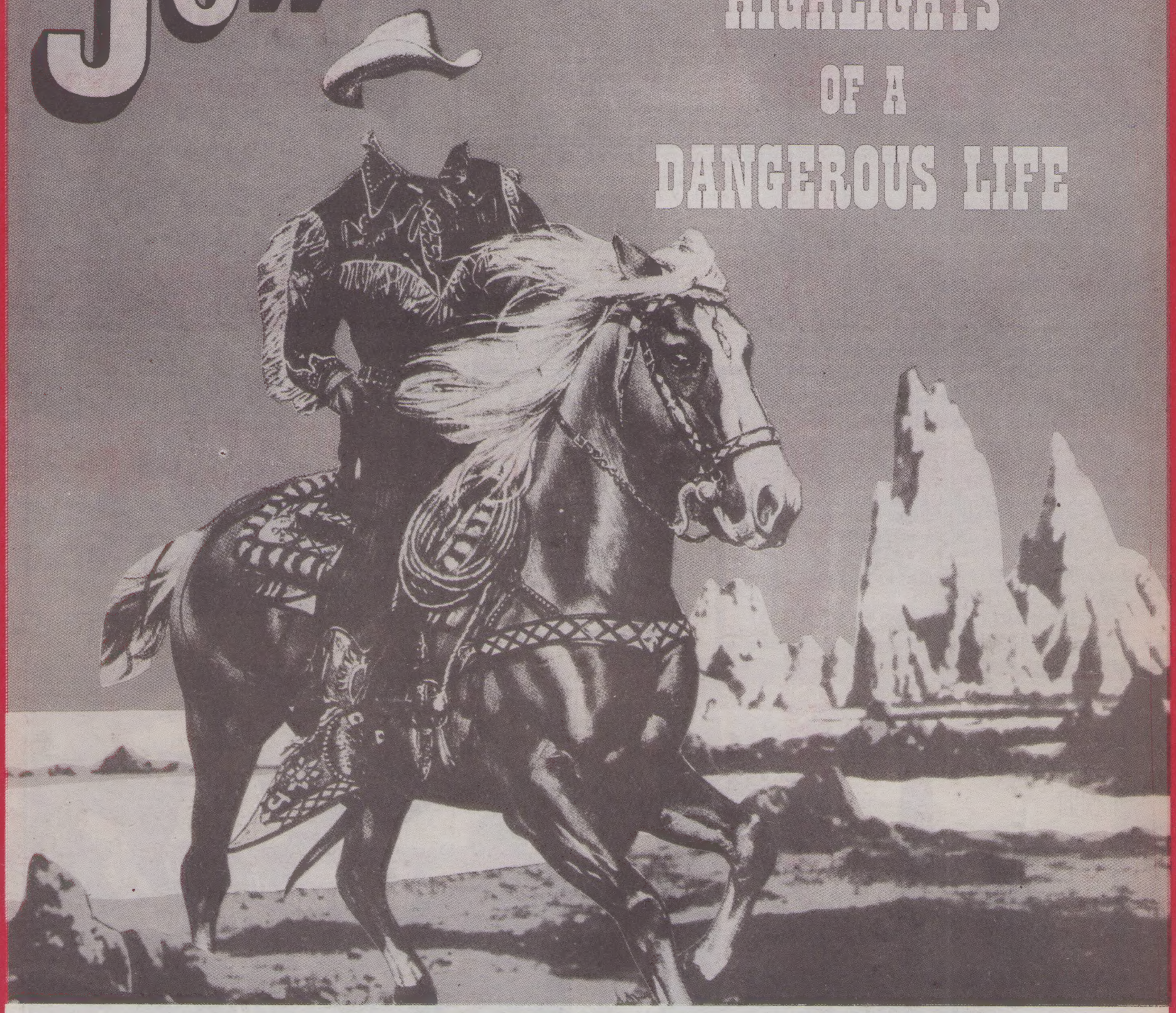
HIGHLIGHTS OF A DANGEROUS LIFE



Featuring their latest single 'Bleeding Hearts' and old favourites 'Injun Joe' and 'Showdown'.

SEPTEMBER TOUR DATES:
Thu 4 Newcastle Workers Club
Fri 5 Manly Hotel
Sat 6 Ringside Rock 11, Selinas
Sun 7 St George Budapest Soccer Club
Wed 10 Roxy, Brisbane
Thu 11 Mansfield Tavern, Brisbane
Fri 12 Bombay Rock
Sat 13 Alexandra Headlands Surf Club
Sun 14 Jet Club, Coolangatta

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Mushrooms

L42004

FESTIVAL